South Fur Lands

No. 7

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THAT'S WHAT SEBKHA WANTED, WASN'T IT? "KAKAPOS AND A MAORI MOTIF"?

WELL, IT'S SORT OF FURRY...

W & SP
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Down Under Caterwaulings

Issue 7

February 1997

Editorial

The Quarantine Period is Over...

We welcome back *South Fur Lands* readers with the sad news that the furry "commune" **Quarantine**, and the home to this great fanzine, is now over. Due to monetary problems, and many more too complicated to explain, the staff here have had to go their furry ways. However, the fanzine still lives and will continue to do so. Any new correspondence, submissions, subscriptions, and contributions can be sent to the new postal address to be found in the inside back page of this mag as well as the URL for the new updated web page. Check it out, it's great.

...And The Furs Are Migrating

This break-up, however, has allowed us the freedom to do the convention tours this year, with at least one or more members of the *SFL* team going to **ConFeatherance** in Melbourne in early February, **OzCon** in Sydney in early March, and **Conspiracy** in Wellington New Zealand over the Easter break. I hope personally to be able to meet most of the furs who contribute to this fanzine and say, "Keep contributing or else." <*grin*> Expect issue 8 to be a big Con issue.

And Welcome Back to South Fur L...YARF!?

On a side note, anyone who picked up issue 45 of **Yarf!** might have noticed the plethora of Australian and New Zealand contributors. Good work guys. Today **Yarf!**, tomorrow the furry world. Muhahahaha...<*cough, cough*>. Sorry. Seriously, it's nice to see that Australasian furry fandom is being recognised by furry fandom at large. Rejoice.

And To Those We Tend To Forget...

Last, but not least, I'd like to say a huge thank you to someone whom, without his tireless work and dedication to this fanzine, it would probably never keep the tight schedule or the great appearance that it does. So thank you to Marko (Haal) Laine for keeping this fanzine on its proverbial paws. You know how grateful we all are. (I've seen all the commissions you've been given.)

Jason (Jagafeh) Gaffney
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief



Our Valued Staff...

Jason Gaffney ..... Publisher
Marko Laine ..... Text Editor/Layout
Simon Raboczi ..... Web Page Design
David MacPherson ..... Life Member

Submission Deadlines

Issue 8 ..... 30th March 1997
Issue 9 ..... 30th June 1997

South Fur Lands

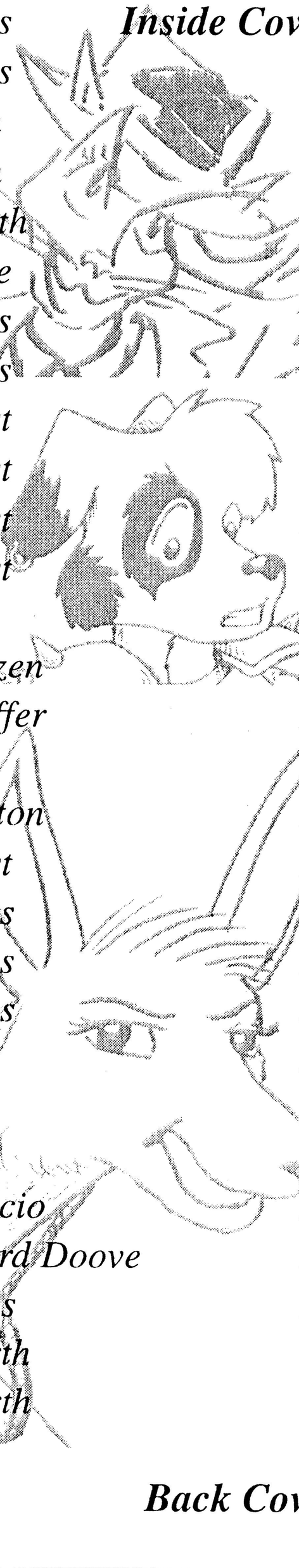
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YAA-HOO!

WELL, LINDGOLD'S ENJOYING IT! HOW ABOUT YOU, MAYFURR?

SNORTY, YOU DIVE-BOMB THE BLEACHERS ONE MORE TIME AND I WILL SQUEEZE YOUR LUNGS OUT!!

"FIRST BRIEF FLIGHT"

©GP '96

SNORTY © BRETT TAMAHORI, MAYFURR © TERRY KNIGHT, LINDGOLD © GRANT PRESTON



"THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!"

FIRST (BRIEF) FLIGHT **Grant Preston**

Three of the NZ furries—Lindgold, Snortenheimer and Mayfurr. Just a quick loop or two around the bleachers. Lindgold's enjoying himself, but Mayfurr isn't that enthused...

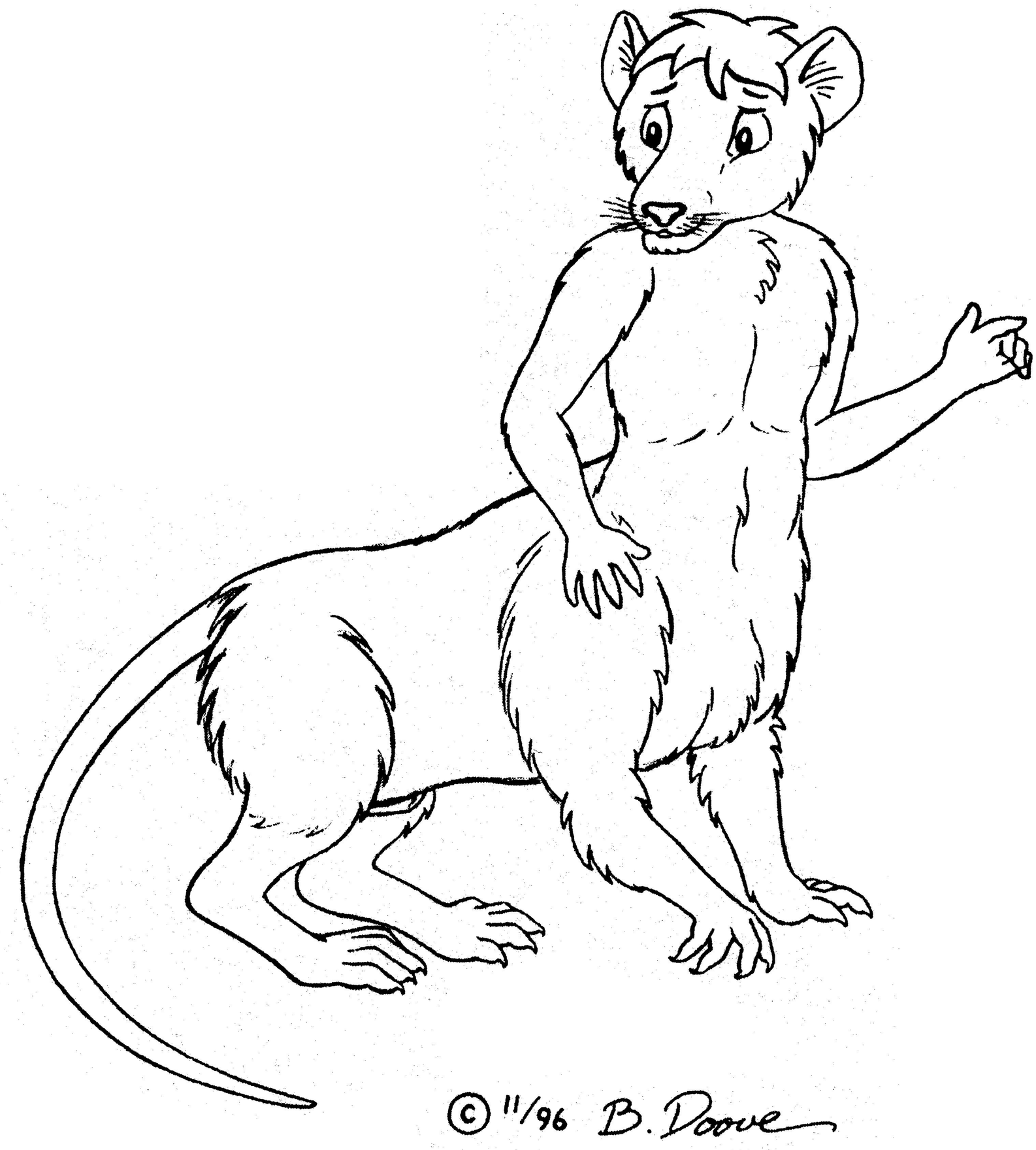
This is part of Snorty's "evolvement" that was worked out via email. What he looks like, the way his wings are shaped, etc.

THIS IS ALL *YOUR* FAULT **Grant Preston**

Generic fantasy pic. A vulpine couple face outward from a corner, with numerous sharp pointy things levelled in their direction. The warrior-vixen, her two short swords drawn, glares accusingly at her companion, indicating he may be the cause of their sticky situation. The mage-fox's knife isn't much good against the weaponry facing them, but his silly grin masks the fact that he may be reaching for a spell with his right hand...



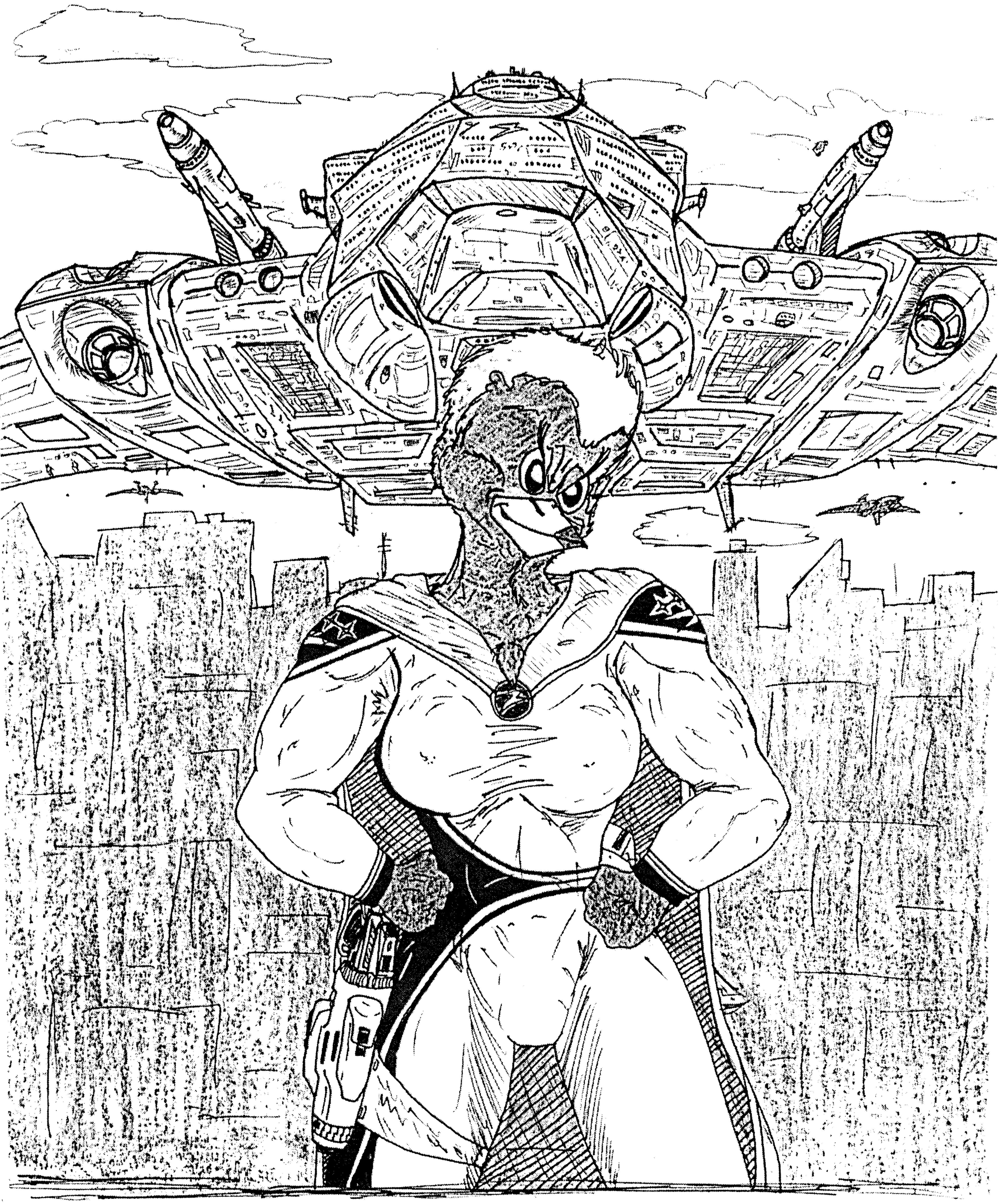
GOTTA DANCE!



MUCH TO HIS CONSTERNATION, HAAL DISCOVERS THE "TAUR" SETTING ON THE TRANSMOGRIFIER.

RAT-TAUR **Bernard Doove**

I have had a few odd requests for sketches, but one of the most intriguing was Haal's request for a rat-taur. After thinking about it for a while, I realised that the best subject for the piece was Haal himself. One booby-trapped transmogrifier was all that was needed. It was a lot of fun to do. Forgive me Haal?



NICE PLANET...



WANT SOME, DOC!??

NICE PLANET **Richard Harris**

Meet the Königswürger, yet another Würger derivative. Würger are Magpie-morphs (from the German for Magpie/Butcher Bird/Shrike). These are my "pet" morphs mainly due to having some really tame ones hanging around when I was young and impressionable. This bunch are currently my race in **Phost VGA Planets** game (a rather amusing play by email universal conquest game). They are race 3, which are rather unimaginatively called "the Bird-Men" prior to the player renaming them, and are a perilously close rip off of the Romulans... After my experience with KATAS (which I shaded with a finepoint pentel) I chickened out and got a big soft pencil to do the shading with... Ignore the evil expression and the ominous starship(s) they are really nice, friendly types. No, really...

WANT SOME, DOC? **Richard Harris**

Rabbits are my favourite villains, I guess I have too many friends who own properties in the country. There are lots of 'em, they can be sneaky, aggressive or utterly loopy. They also tend to be twitchy and paranoid, probably as a result of being on the bottom of the food chain... Then again, hyperactive reflexes and burp guns would probably go a long way towards redressing that! So what we have here are lepine goons with a payback attitude... beware!



GOAT WIZARD **Amy Pronovost**

This started out as a little sketch on a piece of scrap paper... I did some funky things with the inking and it worked!



Amy Pronovost
11/96

UNDER FIRE

Amy Pronovost

Commissioned by Marko Laine

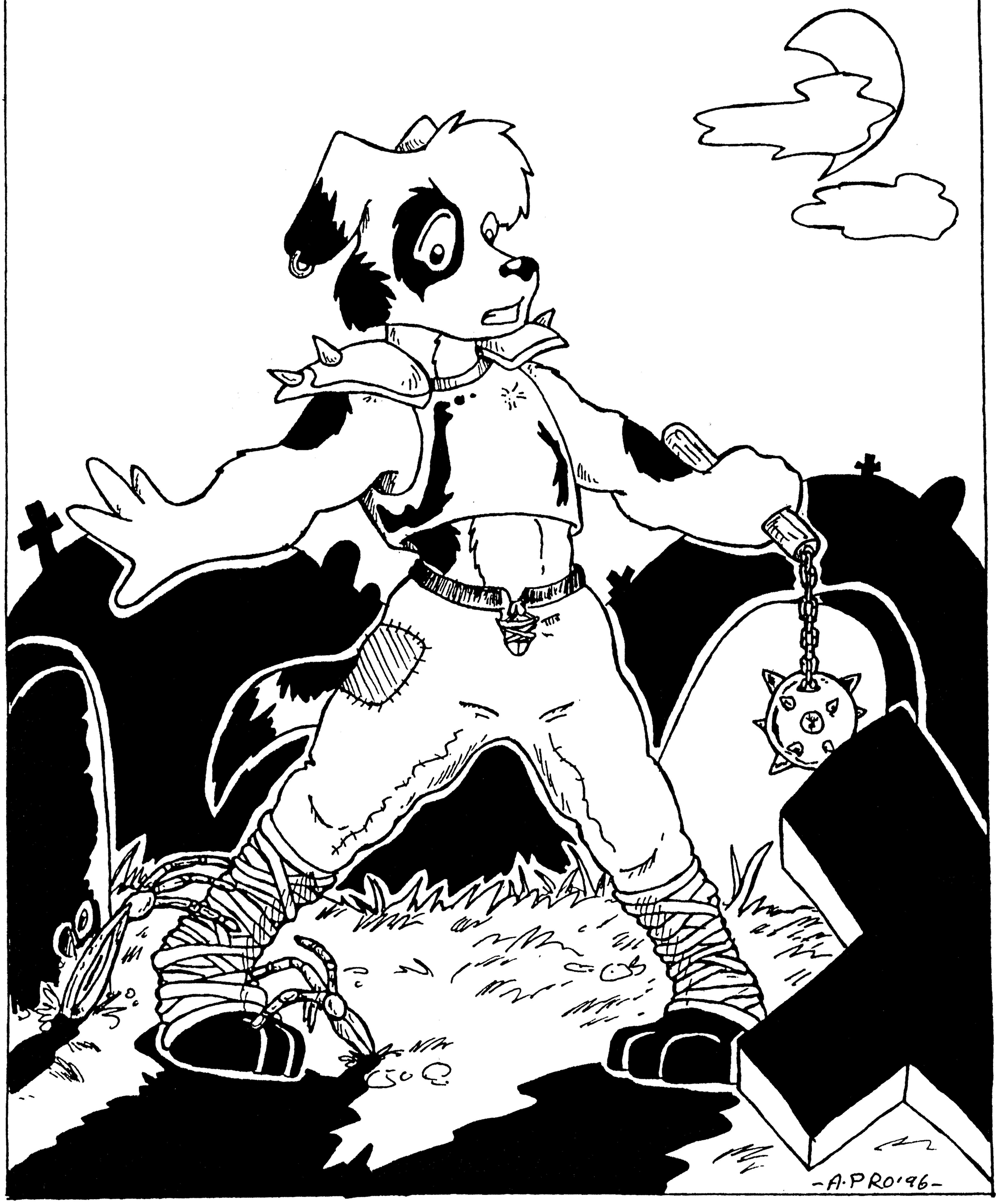
This is one of the commissions Amy did for me in exchange for some original **Star Wars** figurines and a bed spread. (How fitting that it has a **Star Wars** reference in it.) It's not quite the way I visualised it, but with all the grunge elements in it, it's still great fun.



CATREECE

Amy Pronovost

I really liked **Reality Check** so I thought I'd draw a pic of Catreece (Mr Skull's in there too somewhere). She is © Tavicat Productions.



COOTCHIE COO
Spotty Dog runs into a skeleton that likes tickling people!

Amy Pronovost

South Fur Lands
Friday, February 17, 1997 $3.50*

Doc Rat Defiant!

SFL EXCLUSIVE!

EDITORIAL

There has been some controversy in recent editions about the origins of Furry Fandom. So, to avoid any confusion (and possible legal action:), *South Fur Lands* aims in this special supplement to set the record straight by printing not only Craig Hilton's letter, but the original article by Jefferson Swycaffer as well as Craig's response and associated correspondence. It is hoped that this will be of historical interest to our readers and establish once and for all who is responsible for the term "furry fandom".

—MML

24th November 1996

DEAR Jason,

I'm pissed off. Okay, so you grabbed a few eyeballs with the banner headline FURRY SCANDAL! You quite rightly pointed out the incorrect date in my article "Furry Fandom—An Insider's View From The Outside" (*SFL* #2). But jeez, Jase, it was the way you did it. Joke. Ha ha. I'll take it in good spirit, but I hope any other readers won't get the wrong end of the stick. NOW HEAR THIS! NOW HEAR THIS! I was not asked about it before *SFL* #6 went to press, and Jason was not quoting from me when he said that Craig Hilton "deeply regrets failing to check his sources", nor that "my right hand has offended me." That was a JOKE CAPTION, a trick made up by Jason to give the humorous imitation of a tabloid newspaper. Jason, now please do our readers a favour and let them in on the truth. [*mea culpa*, cringing apologies given—MML]

The truth is that actually I did do an immense amount of research for the article, and I did do all I could to check my sources before writing it. This included lengthy international telephone conversations and fax correspondence, as well as digging out archival fanzines such as **Sic Buiscuit Disintegraf** #4. Nevertheless, I do concede that Joy Hibbert's UK 'zine issue in question was in fact from 1984 rather than 1983. The best estimate here was all I could plump for, and yes I did make a mistake. There was no date on the inside cover or the colophon, so what I was left to deal with was only the memory of when it was I'd received it and how long it had taken to reach me.

Now here's how I went. Thinking about it long and hard, I know exactly where I was working when I was telling myself: "Craig, it's no good procrastinating. You should get down to it now and write an article in reply to that great one about furry animals." Date that back to when I must have received the 'zine, and allow for the time it must have taken to reach me by sea mail (which it was) and you're talking two or three months at least, even if Joy had sent me the issue hot off the press. By chance, last weekend I stumbled across my old Family Medicine Programme work log book, which recorded that I was working in that particular hospital term in July-August 1984, and not April as I had first thought. So the publication date of **SBD #4** is taken forward three months, which brings it from late 1983/beginning of 1984 into somewhere well within the first half of 1984. Anyone who has the drive to follow up on this is free to chase up Hibbert herself, last heard of in Stoke-on-Trent. For my part, I think it'll be more instructive to get information from the source of the article, Jeff Swycaffer. Before we go on, bear in mind that whatever was the date **SBD** #4 came out, Jeff's article was written of course some time before, and the conditions that led him to do so even before that. Exactly how long before I don't know. I ended up speaking with him on the 'phone recently to discuss the whole matter, although that was one question we didn't get to. He has however cleared me to give you our first correspondence, which I hope will now appear in *SFL* and throw some light on the very earliest days of furry fandom.

To refresh a few memories, here's the excerpt itself (*SFL* #2, page 26):

> "Joy Hibbert's sturdy genzine **Sic Buiscuit Disintegraf** Number 4, 1983 (from Great Britain, of all places!) was where I first learned of Furry Fandom. The issue contained an article by a correspondent from San Diego, California, with the unlikely name of Jefferson P. Swycaffer, who was discussing the Freudian underpinnings of something he referred to as furry fandom."

A couple more points before moving on. My article necessarily had to use abbreviations and approximations of fact, where the complete details in their fullest would have taken paragraphs to explain and served no purpose in the overview. An example is the question of what was the final issue and date of **Vootie**—do you count the last one that everybody got, or the one that was made and some people received after the group had begun to fall apart, or the one that was meant to be coming out to revive it? They are best left to follow-up correspondence which can take the place of footnotes or appendices, and I can think of no man better suited to this sort of documentation than Fred Patten. Suffice it to say that just because I took the closest brief approximation to the truth doesn't mean I was always inaccurate.

And a quick nod of the head to Jeff. I referred to "the unlikely name of Jefferson P. Swycaffer". Does this sound disrespectful? No-one has accused me of it yet, but let me quickly clarify that no disrespect was intended, and the disbelief was not mine. It was the writer of a LOC in a subse-

quent **SBD** who insisted that it was a pseudonym, surely. Which it wasn't. There's a story behind everything, and Jefferson Putnam Swycaffer and I are the closest of friends to this day.

Anyway, Fred Patten is interested historically in trying to date the very beginning of furry fandom, both in substance and in name. My article was trying to do these two things, but with emphasis more on the substance than the name.

There's no doubt Jeff was talking about furry fandom, even if he didn't use the exact words, and even if the fandom itself hadn't decided on its own collective name nor seen itself as a united genre that was going places. I stand by what I said, though, that the **SBD** article was where I first learned about furry fandom. And as regards precise naming: Jeff, granted, did call it "fuzzy animal fandom". My own approximation in this regard turned out to be... misleading. Okay, I took a slight liberty, it misled our readers, and this knowledge pains me. The more exact truth is that in our correspondence to each other that followed, Jeff and I referred to it, at my suggestion, as "furry animal fandom", and in my reading of it I considered the words "fuzzy" and "furry" could be used interchangeably. So there you have a very interesting piece of data. I used the term "furry animal fandom" in July or August 1984, in a fanzine article which was never published. (If it had been, the world may perhaps have been a different place.)

Jason, you may do me the honour of publishing it now, in full, as an historical document. Twelve years after its time, but better late than never.

"Furry" felt right to me, then and now. In 1984, I was a fan artist known nationally for my predilection for anthropomorphic animals (rats mainly). If I'd known about furry fandom then, I'd have embraced it with both arms. In 1984 I went all swoony over the animated movie **The Secret of NIMH**. In 1985 my anthropomorphic cartoons graced the **Aussiecon II** progress reports and programme book. Through Fred Patten, they ended up in **Rowrbrazzle**, whose members therefore learned of me four years before I was ever aware of them. In 1986 I went all swoony over Steve Gallacci's foxes and his anthro cartoons in general. In 1989 I was in the Murdoch University library researching more about Gallacci in **Amazing Heroes** #129 (Kudos once again goes to Grant Stone for his contribution to world fandom that he'd stocked the library with SF and comic titles and allowed me access both to it and his time.) and stumbled across something about **Rowrbrazzle** in the same magazine. I almost ignored it, except that while photocopying the Gallacci article I thought I might as well take the one on anthropomorphic comic artists while I was there, and one page on a rather strange fanzine would only cost another 5c on the charge card which I couldn't use for anything else so what the hell. This was just before I was about to move to a cushy job in Port Hedland Regional Hospital which gave me a lot of time to draw, and to get better at drawing, so once I had reached a decent level of expertise I looked up the address and said to myself "Why not?"

Marc Schirmeister sent back the best letter I've had in my whole life, telling me I was in. He'd photocopied the Patten/**Aussiecon II** pages for my interest (or was that in his next letter?) which mentioned in passing that Gallacci had written and drawn a sequel to **The Secret of NIMH**. And thanks to my membership in **Rowrbrazzle** I got to meet Gallacci the following year, and to sit on his bedroom floor with his back issues and read it. It occurred to me then that, as distantly removed as I was from the hub of things, there was something fundamentally right with the universe. From the time I'd entered fandom of any kind, a decade previously, it was as if furry fandom was something which had been waiting for me all along. It was not for nothing that I called my essay "Furry Fandom—An Insider's View From The Outside".

Furry fandom has undergone evolution even since my article first appeared in **Phlogiston** #40. I don't know who first coined the name, but it seems now the only hot debate left is whether to spell it with capital letters. The reason I wrote "Furry Fandom" in the first place was because I had typed it originally on the word processor each time as "FF", expecting to substitute the full nomenclature with the electronic wizardry that word processors boast in the pretence that they save us time and effort. It was a line-ball decision, but I thought the capital letter version would please the computer better. After much battling and frustration I found that not only did my text contain "Furry Fandom" but also words like "fluFurry Fandomy" and "JeFurry Fandomerson P. SwycaFurry Fandomer". Not an improvement.

Here's one last item of interest. My 1984 article "Furry Animal Fandom—A Zoophile's View" was sitting in my filing cabinet as a carbon copy done on a manual typewriter. Jeff's letter to me was in my correspondence box typed with an electric typewriter on an aerogramme. **Sic Buiscuit Disintegraf** #4 was in my fanzine archive boxes, stencilled onto sweet-smelling, grainy mimeograph paper in the time-honoured, old-fashioned way.

And you tell the kids of today that—and they won't believe you!

Yours sincerely,

Craig Hilton



On Fuzz

by Jefferson Swycaffer

(Reprinted with permission from **Sic Buiscuit Disintegraf** #4, circa 1984)

We don't know where it started. We aren't certain why. But, while most of us were looking the other way, perhaps ogling the Dallas Cowgirls, a new version of feminine (and masculine) beauty made its appearance in the many underground cults and special interest groups that compose fandom.

Fuzz. Fur. Otter-girls and skunk-women. The appeal, to those who feel it at all, is strong, almost compelling. Those who do not feel the attraction are generally put off, even to the degree of being offended. As with many matters of strong illusory appeal—magic and ESP, football fandom, science fiction fandom itself—there is very little middle ground; you're either for it, or you're against it.

Some blame it on Poul Anderson:

"She was used to that, and content to let people learn what a truly graceful species looked like. They saw a small being, ninety centimetres in length plus a bushy tail which added half again as much. Her legs were long in proportion ending in five prehensile toes on each foot; her arms were equally long, the hands six-fingered. Her round head bore huge emerald eyes, pointed ears, a short muzzle with a broad nose, a delicate mouth with exceedingly sharp teeth framed in wiry whiskers. Silky fur covered her body save for the bare grey skin of hands and feet; it was pure white, except where it formed a blue-grey mask around her eyes. She had once heard herself compared to a cross between an Angora cat, a monkey, a squirrel and a raccoon, and idly wondered which of those were supposed to be on what side of the family. The speculation was natural, since she came of a bisexual, viviparous race like Adzel—homeothermic like his, too, though neither of them was strictly a mammal."

—Poul Anderson, "Mirkheim", Berkley Medallion, 1977

This is direct and straightforward. It features Mr. Anderson's well-known attention to detail, and is correct in its detail of "speculative evolution" as the "science" is currently known. (As opposed to Edgar Rice Burroughs' ridiculous oviparous Princesses and ludicrous winged men).

But Anderson's view is rather clinical; there seems to be missing the lyrical or poetic touch, the tenderness that characterises much of "fuzzy animal fandom". Present, however, is the hint of prurient, almost salacious titillation. Sex, it seems, is a companion concept to this fuzzy alien.

Some blame it on Cordwainer Smith:

"C'mell stared at the floor, her red hair soft as the fur of a Persian cat. It made her head seem bathed in flames. Her eyes looked human, except that they had the capacity of reflecting when light struck them, the irises were the rich green of the ancient cat. She had a womanliness which was truer than that of any hominid woman. She knew the value of her trained smile, her splendidly kept red hair with its unimaginable soft texture, her lithe young figure with firm breasts and persuasive hips. She knew down to the last millimetre the effect which her legs had on hominid men. True humans kept few secrets from her. The men betrayed themselves by their unfulfillable desires, the women by their irrepressible jealousies. But she knew people best of all by not being one herself. She had to learn by imitation, and imitation is conscious. A thousand little things which ordinary women took for granted, or thought about just once in a whole lifetime, were subjects of acute and intelligent study to her. She was a girl by profession; she was human by assimilation; she was an inquisitive cat by her genetic nature. Now she was falling in love with Jestocost and she knew it."

—Cordwainer Smith, "The Ballad of Lost C'mell"

Those of you who have peered into the social sciences, either to dabble or to study, have discovered that there are no single sources for any movement. Out of a thousand others, there are these:

- Walt Kelly's Mam'selle Hepzibah, who started as an ordinary cartoon skunk in the Pogo strip, and was evolved, stylistically, until in the late 50's her face was a caricature of Kelly's wife Stephanie.
- Characters in Marvel and DC comics, such as Tigra (Marvel), although Marvel's best known example would be the (male) Blue Beast. (May I descend to name DC's 'Dumb Bunny'?)
- Various advertising outfits, involving a woman in a furry suit. The example that comes most quickly to mind is a woman in a mouse-suit, advertising American cheeses.

And others, though the list rapidly becomes obscure, and leads into paths not directly profitable.

The psychoanalytic underpinnings of "fuzzy animal fandom" goes far back into American history, and thence into the cultural framework of European myth.

The current generation is somewhat inured to the appeal, formerly very powerful, of the 'Playboy Bunny'. But the mythic repercussions of that one-time archetype have not ceased to echo through the unconscious psychosexual mind of the public.

Other psychoanalytic expressions are the obvious relations to pubic hair, with the observation, predating Freud, that although secondary sexual characteristics (breasts and buttocks) are generally alluring, primary sexual characteristics are subtly 'ugly' or at least awkward. A comparison of the 'gynaecological quarterly' brand of 'mens magazines' with the more subdued pictorial essays of 'Playboy' (which has become a pillar of the establishment, ironically) will demonstrate the fact that the more that shows, the less appeal is felt. The 'safety' that pubic hair gives, when covering the almost frightening presence of genitalia, makes that patch of fur, on women, viewed by men, a relieving and secure 'turn on'. This point, which I refer to as "The Safety of covered Uncoveredness" is essential to the psychosexual

analysis of the appeal of the fuzzy milieu. Western culture has developed the appeal of "safe sex" to a rather fine point, especially in recent years. Prior to the arrival of relatively safe birth control methods sex was forbidden. Women, the second-class citizens of all nations were forced to guard their virtue as they would guard their most prized possession. With the ability to separate sexual activity from the complications thereof (pregnancy and legal responsibility) sexual play became much more dangerous. It is no longer safe for a young man, himself not ready for sex, but ready for sexual-social sex play, to 'mock-proposition' a young woman. The answer might all too well be 'yes, lets'. The incredible rise in high-school sexual activity speaks for the dangers of peer-pressure, and the inability to say "No", when giving a clear refusal is equivalent to offending a perhaps loved individual.

'Safe sex' involves visual stimulation (the trend towards bralessness) along with the enhanced ability to say 'no' without giving offence. And bralessness is a style in the same direction as the microscopic swimsuit, or, in the final analysis, the covered genitalia. Opposing the trend towards coveredness, is the trend towards uncoveredness. Swimsuits shrink. Tops become more sheer. What more perfect culmination of that trend would be possible than a woman (or man) who is covered from top to bottom in sleek fur, giving total revelation at the same time it gives total coverage. Fuzzy animal fandom is given a favourable climate in which to evolve. The question remains: why animals?

Animal fandom is partially an expression of the currently growing ecological movement, which also contains touches of anti-science, anti-technology, and antihuman beliefs. This movement condemns man's role in altering the earth's environment, whether as destroyer, or as caretaker. The effects that mankind has had on the whales is well documented, as is, on the other hand, man's role in preventing deforestation by combating wildfires. Mankind, as caretaker, is seem to have done a worse job rather than a better one. Is it not the place to this essay to examine the truth of these charges, merely to document the existence of the complaint. If this is yet another expression of Primevalism—Man should never have left the hunting and gathering stage; civilization is evil'—it is at least couched in somewhat more progressive terms. We should advance in harmony with nature, not regress to it.

But, for many, this advancement means getting rid of either 99% of all humans, or simply extinguishing humanity altogether. The animals are seen, metaphorically, as never having lost the Garden of Eden, but having had it robbed from them. Animals are seen as having the Primevalist virtues: strength, self-sufficiency, non-reliance upon artificial resources (science) and so forth.

This, too, is a 'safe' philosophy. Nature, whether or not personified, will take care of her children, if they learn the wisdom not to fiddle with its balance. Winter storms, the constant cycle of "fight or flight" are seen as the necessary spice of danger that makes the "Safety of Covered Uncoveredness" a workable philosophy.

A final element in all his is the "pet/child" attraction, including the illicit sexual attraction that all people apparently unconsciously have for their pets and children. The helplessness of the dependent pet/child instinctively brings out a protective reaction. The protective reaction is one basis for love. And love is one basis for sexual tenderness. Only the sickest of social deviants actually complete the thoughts and drag them into real actions; the unconscious wishes in these directions are in all of us. Animals, many "fuzzy animal fandom" animals, and indeed, the previous centuries' view of women, include this element of helplessness in the unconscious reaction to the stimuli.

Safety, then, is the key. The tensions generated between a desire that is repressed, and the desire to remove the shields that protect, gives this, and many more subtle genres of erotica and exotica their charm. The knowledge of safety, with the subliminal hint of danger, or, very much the same, the knowledge of unavailability, with the buried awareness of real sexual experience actually available, makes this and other forms of art attractive to those who desire fulfilment, but who are not prepared to actualise these desires.

Furry Animal Fandom—A Zoophile's View

by Craig Hilton

(An article submitted to **Sic Buiscuit Disintegraf** circa 1984, but was not printed.)

I thought that Jefferson Swycaffer's article "On Fuzz" (**Sic Buiscuit Disintegraf** #4) was delightful and intriguing. Briefly, it ran that furry humanoids are currently in vogue in local SF fandom, and, although the exact origin of this taste is unclear, its cause could be explained as its display of "covered uncoveredness", (separating sexuality from the frightening reality of primary sexual characteristics) and its expression of primevalism, powered by the voice of the growing ecological movement.

Now, as a creature with a highly vested interest in the subject (I love small, furry animals), I feel driven to reply. Jefferson made many valid points, but was not broad enough, neglecting the context in which the subject lay. Fandom in his part of the world may be going gaga over furry animals, but fandom is part of society, and society has always been gaga over furry animals. The arguments he used were more rightly appropriate for society's preference—they held nothing specific for SF devotees—in which case they failed to explain the full scope of the question.

He talked of "fuzzy animal fandom" (or, as I prefer for no valid reason to call it, "*furry* animal fandom"), as if SF fandom had taken out a patent on anthropomorphism. Of course, I'm not entirely sure what it is he was describing, as most of the relevant background was only implied and I'm not privy to northern hemisphere fannish circles, but as it sounds analogous to some other categories with which the strange, global clan enjoys to label itself, such as "Vegemite fandom", "floppy mullet fandom" and "blind drunk fandom", I think I can hazard a guess. "Furry animal fandom"; by inference, is the group of people who have in common two things—SF fandom, which is rare in society at large, and an attraction to furry animals or their concept, which is extremely common in any people anywhere and anywhen.

So now that we are both standing on the same ground, I can begin to trace Jefferson's footsteps. He couldn't say just where this thing had come from, and I don't blame him either, but he did tell us why it was here.

Well, as for the Safety of Covered Uncoveredness, I wouldn't disagree with him except to suggest that he dwells

too much on its meaning in a purely sexual frame. Given that a furry being which grants total revelation at the same time as total coverage can provide a sexually refreshing image, it is also a suitable base for images in many avenues, as I shall describe later on the note about stylisation. This stylisation simplifies a concept, allowing the essence of one or another characteristics to be imagined in a clearer form. In this case, for example, sexuality could be either emphasised or underplayed, as per the writer's/presenter's need.

Now, his allusions to animals as nurtured children of the Garden of Eden may have a grain of truth for their current open-armed, open-minded acceptance of fandom, but the whole reason surely runs much deeper. Anthropomorphism traverses the entire cultural spectrum and extends down the ages, via Garfield, the Muppets, King Kong, Bugs Bunny, C. S. Lewis, Richard Adams, Kenneth Graham, Beatrix Potter, Rudyard Kipling, Lewis Carroll, Jean de la Fontaine, the brothers Grimm, St George, Monkey, Medieval Allegories, Aesop, Romulus and Remus, tribal totems and the very children of the Garden of Eden (and they should know—they were **in** it). There's more to favourable climates than the growing ecological movement.

And you can take the field a little wider, including non-furry non-animals, such as from J. R. R. Tolkien (well—non-furry from the ankles up, anyway), which is easily covered in Jefferson's theory, and Greek Mythology, which is not. In fact, anything goes as long as it can offer a stylised analogy of the real world.

Okay, I'm standing in a field of discussion, having followed Jefferson's footsteps as he hunted the furry animal fandom. (They go sort of down the middle and then off the left a bit. He made a grab, and ended up with the leg and was last seen happily gnawing at the bone.) What I'll try to do is trace out the perimeter of its territory and then slowly corner it.

Furry animal fandom. Why Fandom? Well, I've already gone into that.

What Animal? Interaction with any imaginary character, in literature, thought or other form of expression, can resemble any part of a wide spectrum of reality, from the highly complex (true or fictitious), through simplification to the highly stylised caricature. It can comprise a thirty-one year old man who's head clerk in the head office of Prudential, who is wearing brown socks which his wife threatened to darn because his right toe was beginning to show but who spilled tea on his tie this morning because it went down the wrong way while he was deep in thought as to whether he should get his shoulder looked at which gives him a bit of gyp whenever he plays squash, and the last Wednesday night he lost four games to two against his good friend who was inviting him anyway over for dinner next Sunday, which might be a good opportunity for him to scrounge some advice on his shoulder, being that his friend's wife's a nursing sister at Edgeware General.

Now, not all literature need approach the mundane complexity of real life. It's not necessarily boring, but Good Grief it's hard work and unproductive to the aim of the transaction, into the bargain. Obviously, literature, speech and thinking exist for the purpose of putting across information, meanings or ideas, or one form or another. Much of this is done through stylisation—presenting the salient information/meanings/ideas within a simplified vehicle, highlighting the relevant, discarding the extraneous; It's a distillation, a concentration, a simplification. It's much more ubiquitous than you'd first think.

Take a look around—stories, cartoons, diagrams, logos, maps, ET key rings. (Oh Hell! The furry animal fandom has just discovered how weak the boundary fence is, and it's bursting through and making a break for it. After it, lads!)

Animals have long been recognised as an ideal vehicle to this end. Halfway between humans and rocks, they are sufficiently like and unlike us to provide a rich and diverse scope of possibilities. Distil the right animal the right way and you can have anything you want. The cat to portray a slinky but potent sexuality, the rat for an intelligent, observant pragmatist, the fox for a cunning but respectable blackguard, the eagle for a noble feudal ruler. Generically, for example, they can be used perfectly to visualise the Primeval Virtues, such as strength, self-sufficiency and independence from artificial resources. (Hello, Jefferson. Enjoying your meal?)

Why furry? Firstly, the mammals, being more identifiably human, enjoy a privileged position in the role of stylisation. On top of this, or perhaps in relation to the fact that we all **are** mammals, fur is nice. It gives pleasure. It's soft and warm, fluffy and snugly. You can brush it down so that the sleek plushness catches the lofty, golden rays of evening sun and lets them drip like hot treacle.

Furry animals are lovely. Their magic can embody the child, the mother and the lover, as millions and millions of voices from recorded and unrecorded history would testify if ever they could. I myself have succumbed to the enchantment. So, in their own individual way, have those people who call it Fuzzy Animal Fandom. So have many.

(Excerpts from a letter by Jefferson Swycaffer responding to Craig Hilton's article, dated 5 October 1984. Reprinted with permission.)

Dear Craig:

Re furry or fuzzy, I have been using the term fuzzy, probably inspired by H. Beam Piper's **Little Fuzzy** novels, but I won't scorn your choice of term.

By "The Great Fuzzy Animal Fandom", I primarily mean anthropomorphic cartooning. I know that the distinction here is over fine points in a sub-sub-sub-genre of cartoon art, and I also am sadly aware that I'm no expert on cartoon art. I was trying to distinguish between cartoon characters such as Garfield, or even Mickey Mouse, and the lank and swanky sex-toys of some of the artists with whom I have lately become familiar.

Stephen Jay Gould, in his book **The Panda's Thumb**, discusses the evolution of Mickey Mouse. In **Steamboat Willie**, Disney's first cartoon, Mickey Mouse has a fairly long nose and a low brow, with very small eyes. Later, he got a shorter nose, larger eyes, and a taller domed forehead. The reason for this (according to Gould, and I concur) is that these are specific cues, visual cues, to trigger the parenting instinct in humans. (And in other animals; ducks, dogs, cats, etc. all have short noses and large eyes in their youth.) Gould suggested that these visual cues are what makes the character of Mickey Mouse so appealing. (Notice that Garfield also evolved since his first appearance, and in the same direction. If you follow Cerebus the Aardvark comics, you'll have seen the same thing.) I suggest that the sexual purity/appeal of children is a part of what I

have seen; this is clear in the sunken chest and rounded tummy of, say, Bugs Bunny. But when the cues become more greatly obvious—breasts and hips and thighs and stuff (yum!)—the cues are heady and heavy, while still being cues, or hints: triggers to an unconscious desire that hasn't become fully conscious. (Well, not quite...)

I agree with nearly everything you said, but wish to conclude that what you say is not mutually exclusive with what I say! I do come from a strong Freudian tradition, which effectively blinkers me; the Freudian doctrine/dogma of my analysis may have been obvious. I am currently in heated debate with some several Jungians in a troupe here in San Diego—this when I'm not patrolling in front of an abortion clinic that is under siege from some right-wing Christian fundamentalists who want it closed down, or attending fannish activities, or writing (my first book, **Not in Our Stars**, was published in September [1984] from Avon Books), or complaining, which I tend to do a lot! (I just scanned back over the preceding ¶, and want to mention that I'm patrolling in **defence** of the abortion clinic, not in protest against it! Counter-demonstrations, yes?)

But ultimately, it is the Freudian tradition in which I am steeped; the psychological danger of primary sexual characteristics is a hallmark of the Freudian view (as is Oedipal conflict, alas...). For the moment, take this confused letter as an agreement with most of what you had to say. In any case, thank you for caring enough to respond, and accept, please, my condolences for having been rejected by **Sic Buiscuit**. (How can they be so unclever as to reject thoughtful comment?) I am pleased, by the way, to hear that you seemed to agree with some of my thesis; I am sorry if I have failed to make clear what my views are, or precisely where the differences lie between our views.

(Excerpts from a letter by Craig Hilton to Jefferson Swycaffer, dated 13 November 1984. Reprinted with permission.)

Dear Jeff,

Finally, finally I have found the opportunity to reply to your reply to my reply to your article. It wasn't my neglect. Oh no, not apathy. I've simply been working my guts out. Things have improved so that I'm only working out my duodenum and jejunum, and the rest of gastrointestinal system stays put.

Science Fiction—I've loved it since I was a teenager, mainly from having a bent towards science. Yes, I read *nothing* but SF. This year it was **The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge** and **Transmitters** (a new book by Australian Damien Broderick—excellent).Last year it was **The Stainless Steel Rat** and **Hospital Station** (absolute rubbish by James White). Anyone who reads more than two books a year is a bludger who should be working harder.

Oh, and **Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH**, but I'll come back to that.

I love art, especially drawing, especially cartooning (for reasons of time, you understand). I love fantasy. I love rats. You may have seen a couple of my efforts in the **Aussiecon II** progress reports, or other places out and about (brought over to world conventions). The **Aussiecon II** committee saw fit to ask me to design their publicity poster, which currently is just completed. Keep an eye out for it—I love it!

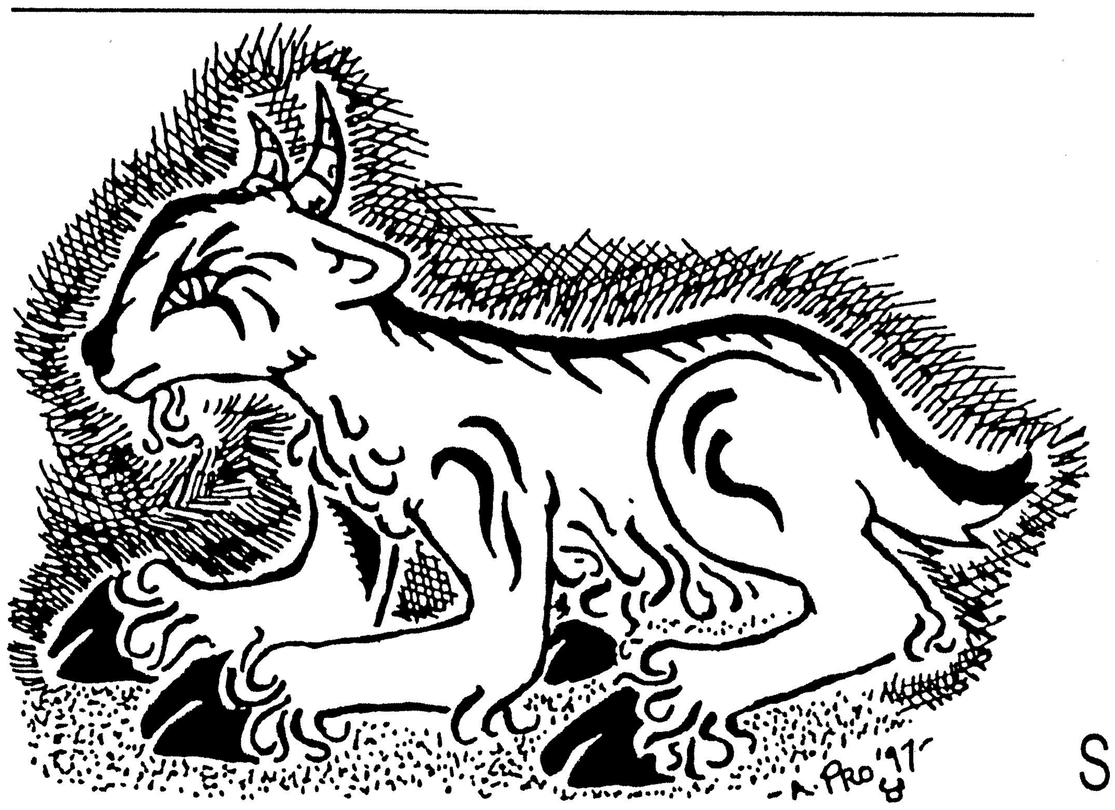
Freud and Jung I have not become involved with in a structured way, except in passing, during my studies. The broad, conceptual overview I take may be prone to a label or a category, but this must be someone else's job—Philosophy isn't my special subject.

Neither entirely Freudian, Chemist nor Mathematician but with a smattering of all, nevertheless I take fully for granted your exposition on visual cues to the parenting instinct. This is well known, mainly to the largest and most successful mass market cartoon companies, who have made the fullest use of it—Disney, Warner, King, Lance. A corollary is that the most acceptable produce of cartoons are "cute" characters and stories, aimed primarily at children. Enter, of course, the "cute-backlash" sex and violence cartoons which exist (in the popular sanitised media, at least, as opposed to their original underground comic roots) solely as a reaction, and offer no more really than broken taboos.

Middle ground in cartooning is hard to find but it seems to be becoming less so. Fantasy has always been its backbone, for through generally more expensive than live film, a cartoon can do things in the realm of fantasy which is otherwise impossible to show. A broader scope for cartooning's expression (both on screen and in print) together with increasing technical expertise in live film special effects has helped meld the two and create more common ground and an atmosphere which, I believe, allows cartooning more of the dignity it deserves.

Some points to close. Note:

1. Cartoons which are primarily for children but also aim for other age groups on several levels—**Watership Down**, **The Secret of NIMH**.
2. Cartoons which achieve true middle ground and allow dignity for their art form—**Wizards**, **Yellow Submarine**, **The Heavy Metal Movie** (made very good use of cartooning), **Animal Farm** (way ahead of its time in this regard).
3. Cartoons which attempted middle ground but failed to translate into their medium—**Lord of the Rings**.
4. We're not necessarily stuck with the cute. In the team of artists designing for **The Rescuers**, I think it was Ward Kimball whose preliminary characterisations for the mice protagonists were *too* rodent-like: snouts too long, eyes too beady. Compare with **The Secret of NIMH**, the first movie I've seen where rat protagonists work successfully without being sweetened up with cute, infantile bodily characteristics.
5. Forgive me for dwelling on movies rather than illustrations. If space and time permitted, I'd love to diversify.





... and sometimes, the old line, "I'm an artist, v
actually works... So we went home, and put per



Marco Morales

would you lie on my bed and pose for me?" when spoken at a nightclub,
n to paper.

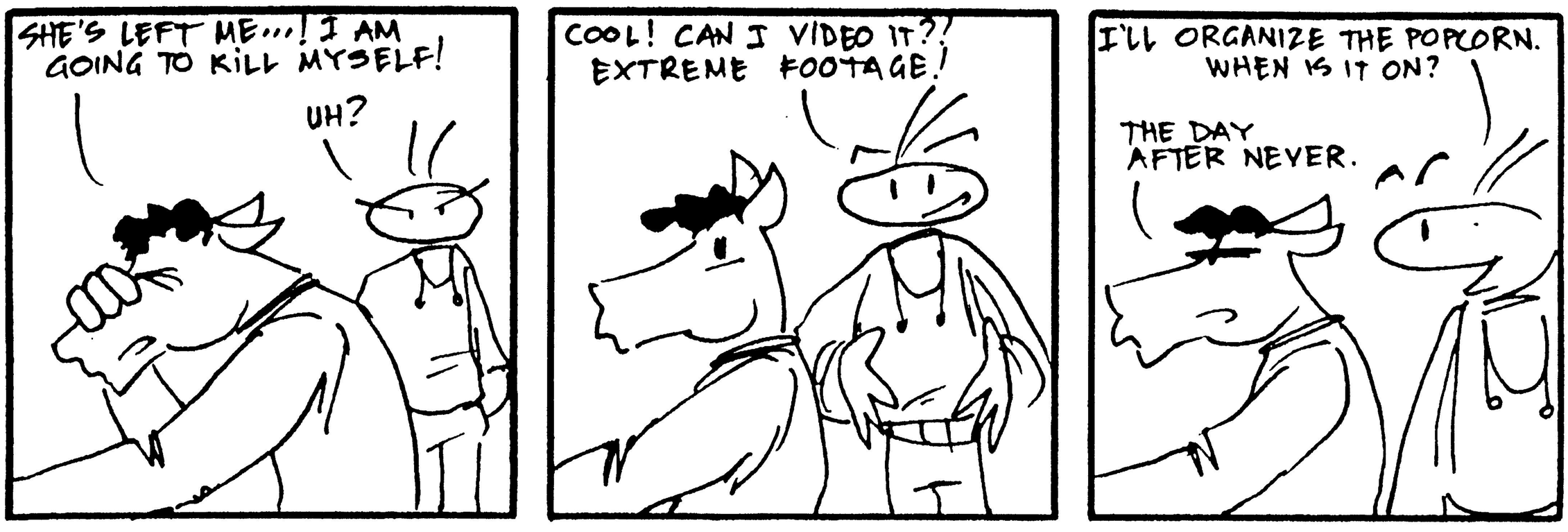


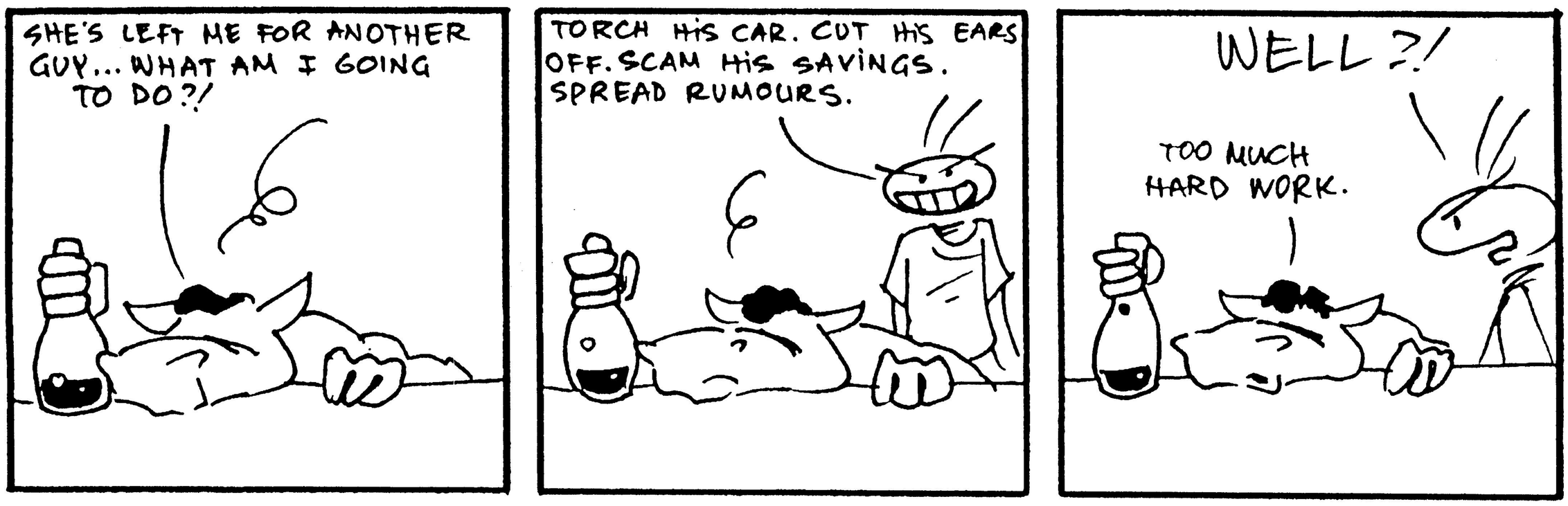
DIP-DIP MEETS ROWEN!

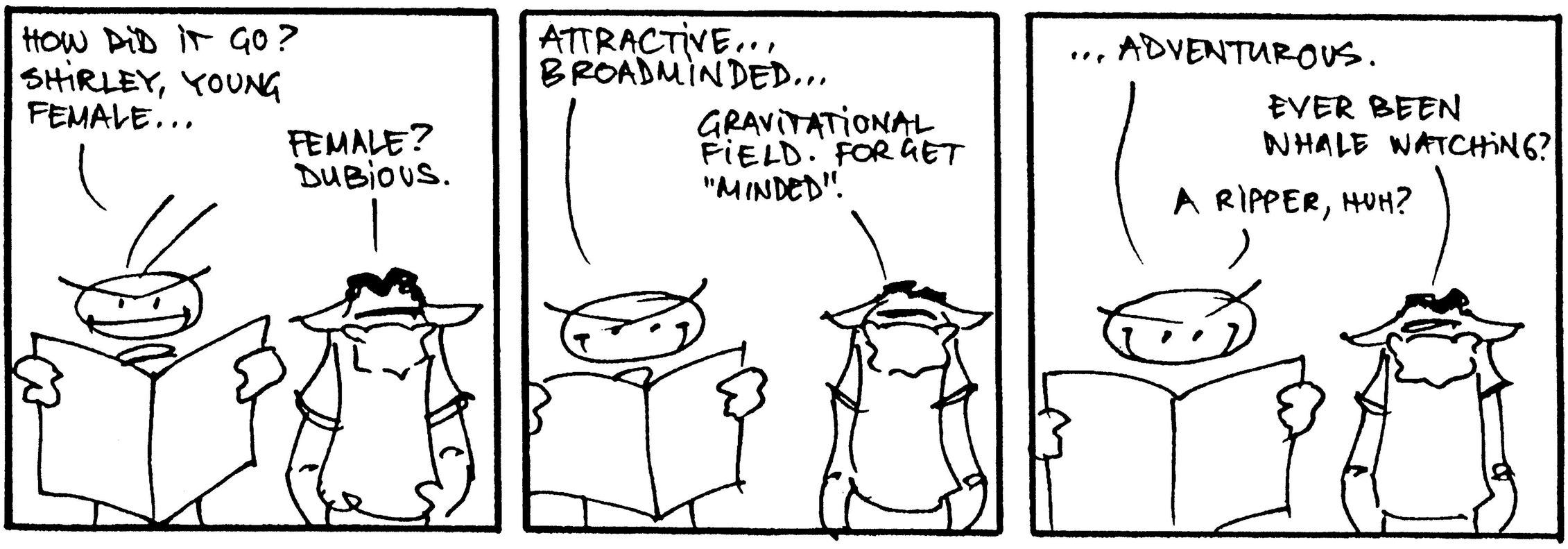
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DIP-DIP MEETS ROWEN! **Marco Morales**

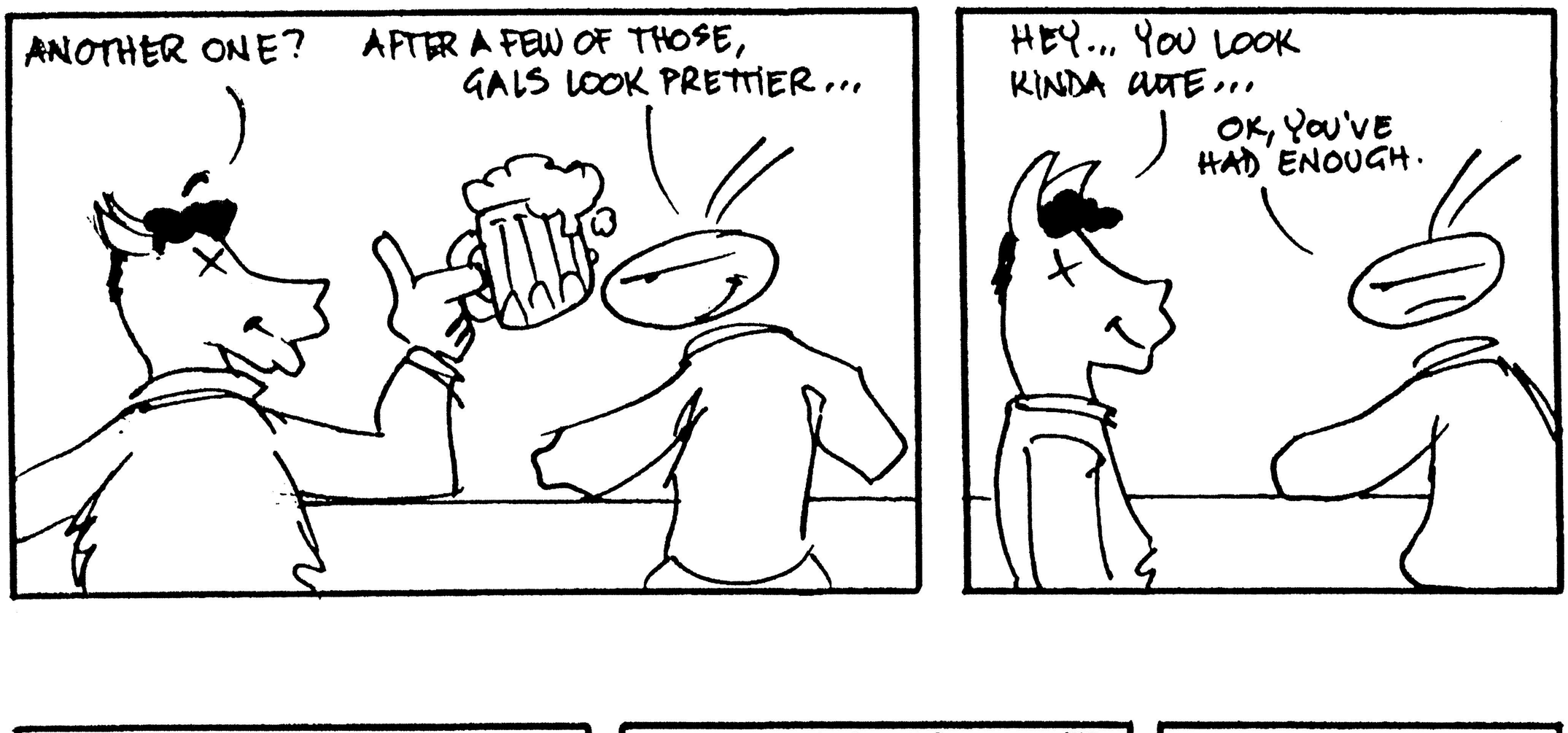
Where the very-together Rowen feline makes sure everyfur knows where they stand. Only in Dip-Dip's case, the possum, a "stand" does take on a different perspective...

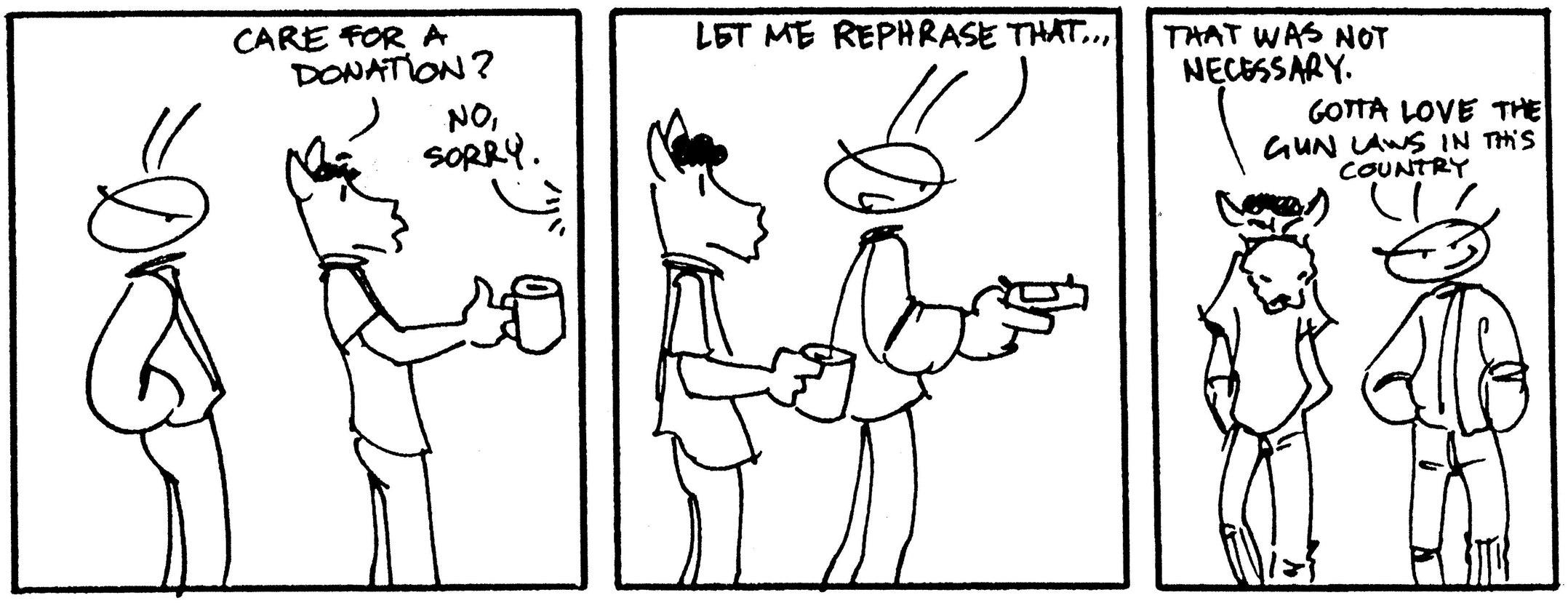

SHE'S LEFT ME...! I AM GOING TO KILL MYSELF!
UH?
COOL! CAN I VIDEO IT?! EXTREME FOOTAGE!
I'LL ORGANIZE THE POPCORN. WHEN IS IT ON?
THE DAY AFTER NEVER.

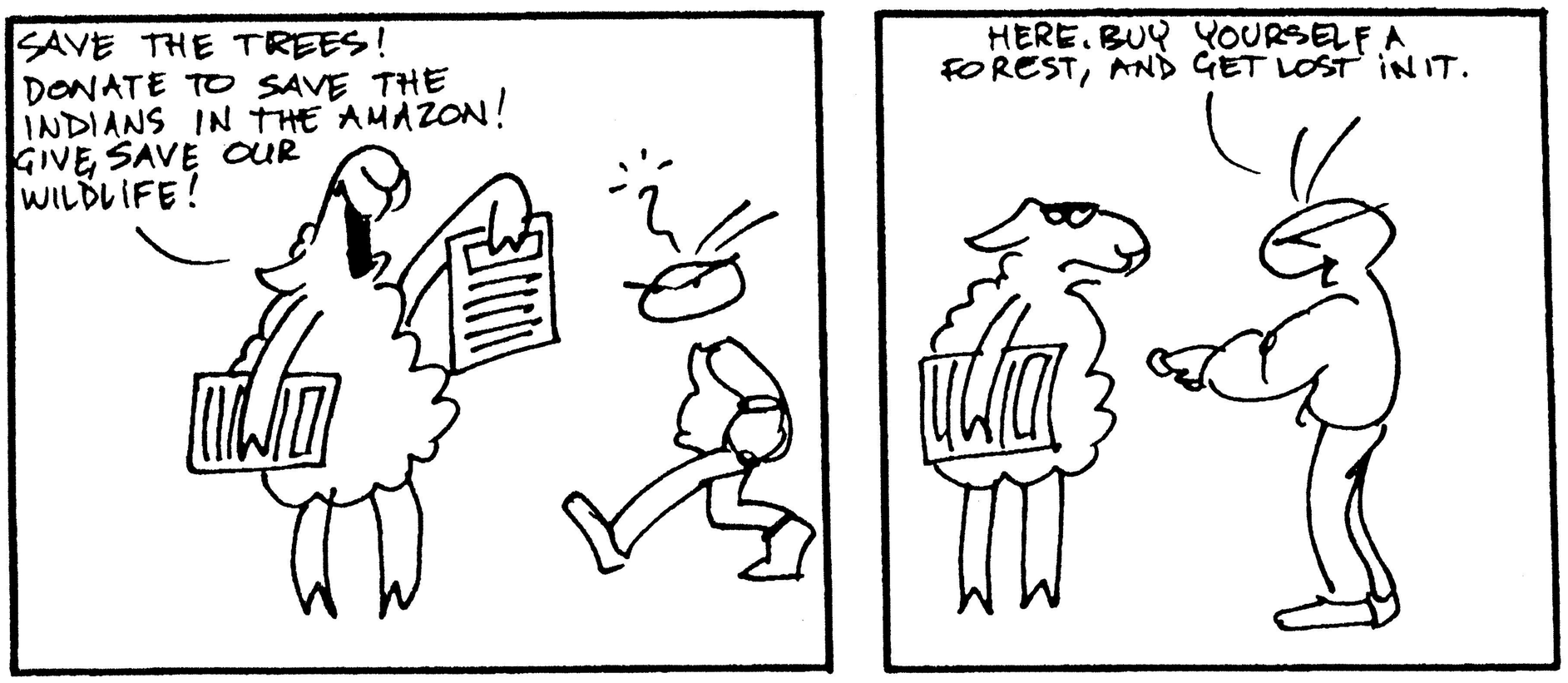

SHE'S LEFT ME FOR ANOTHER GUY... WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!
TORCH HIS CAR. CUT HIS EARS OFF. SCAM HIS SAVINGS. SPREAD RUMOURS.
WELL?!
TOO MUCH HARD WORK.


HOW DID IT GO? SHIRLEY, YOUNG FEMALE...
FEMALE? DUBIOUS.
ATTRACTIVE... BROADMINDED...
GRAVITATIONAL FIELD. FORGET "MINDED".
... ADVENTUROUS.
EVER BEEN WHALE WATCHING?
A RIPPER, HUH?

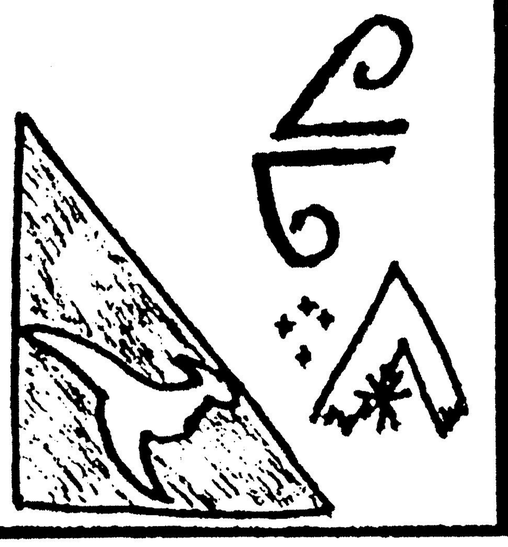

I JUST SIGNED UP WITH AN INTRODUCTION AGENCY...
... SO YOU GET TO MEET LOSERS LIKE YOURSELF?
YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU HAD A CHILDHOOD.


ANOTHER ONE?
AFTER A FEW OF THOSE, GALS LOOK PRETTIER...
HEY... YOU LOOK KINDA CUTE...
OK, YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH.

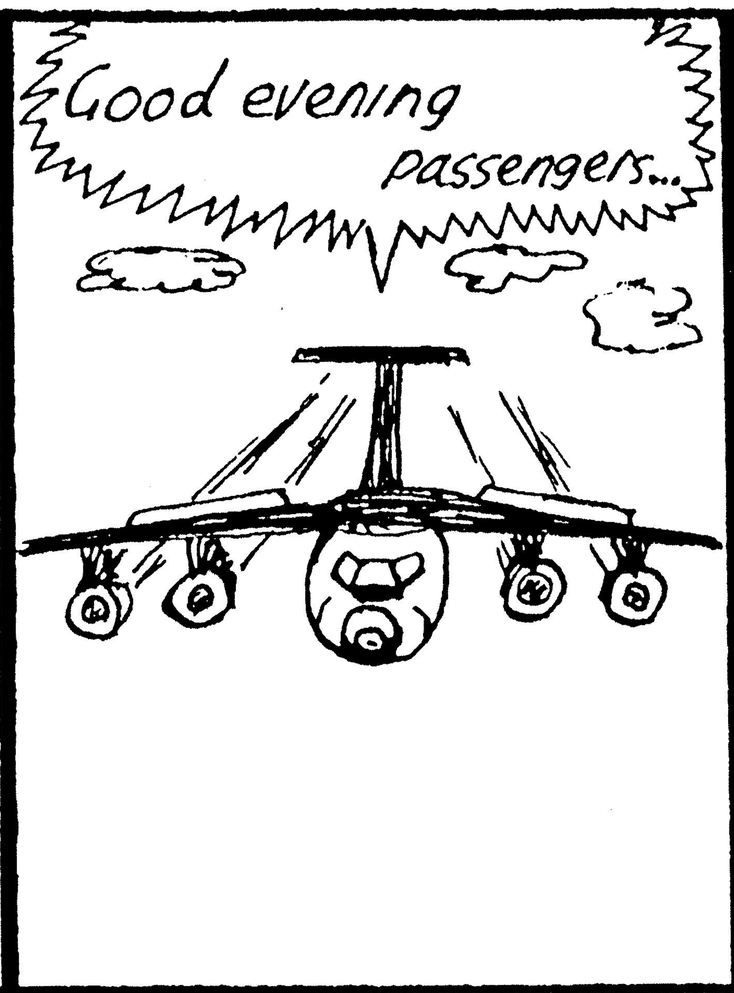

CARE FOR A DONATION?
NO, SORRY.
LET ME REPHRASE THAT...
THAT WAS NOT NECESSARY.
GOTTA LOVE THE GUN LAWS IN THIS COUNTRY


SAVE THE TREES! DONATE TO SAVE THE INDIANS IN THE AMAZON! GIVE, SAVE OUR WILDLIFE!
HERE. BUY YOURSELF A FOREST, AND GET LOST IN IT.

"ONE NIGHT OUT FLYING"

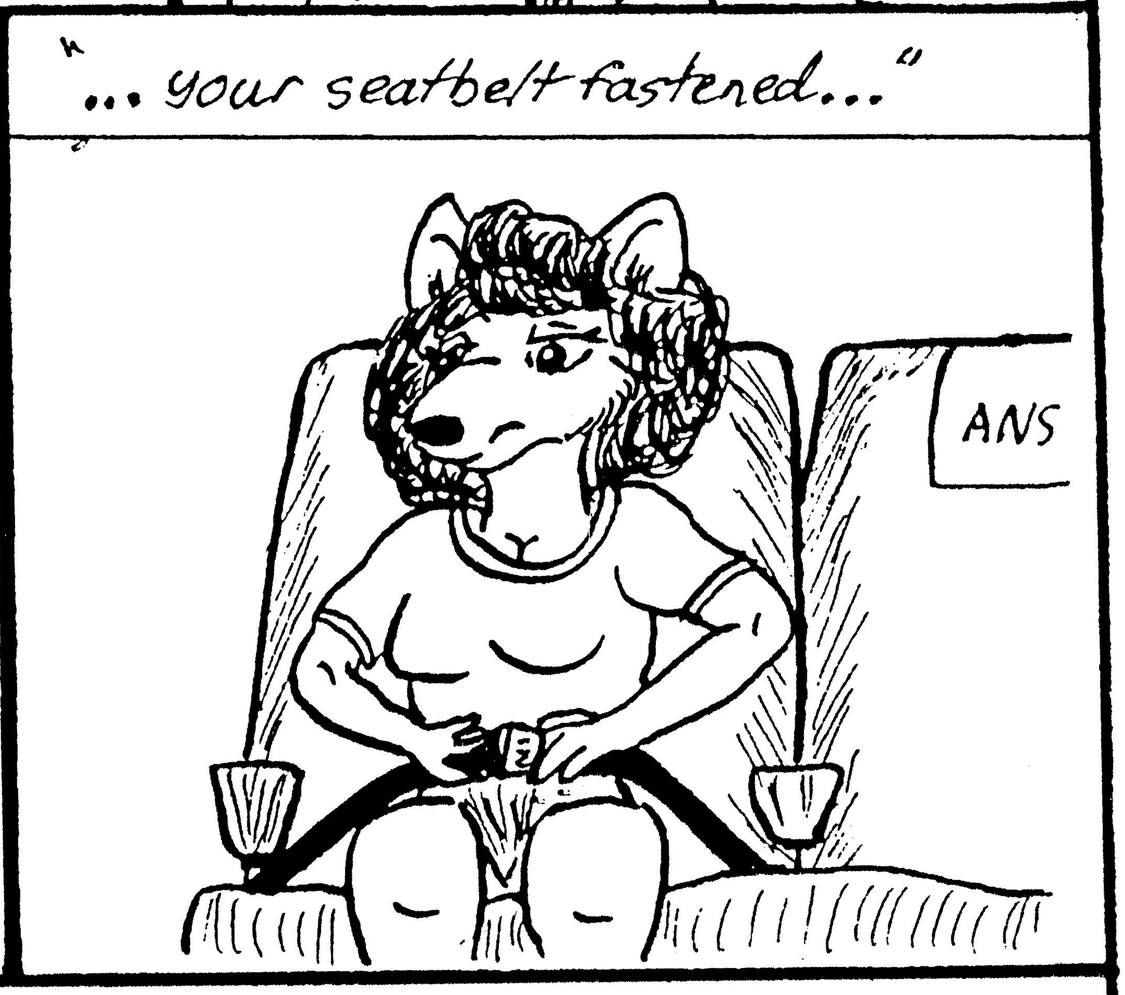


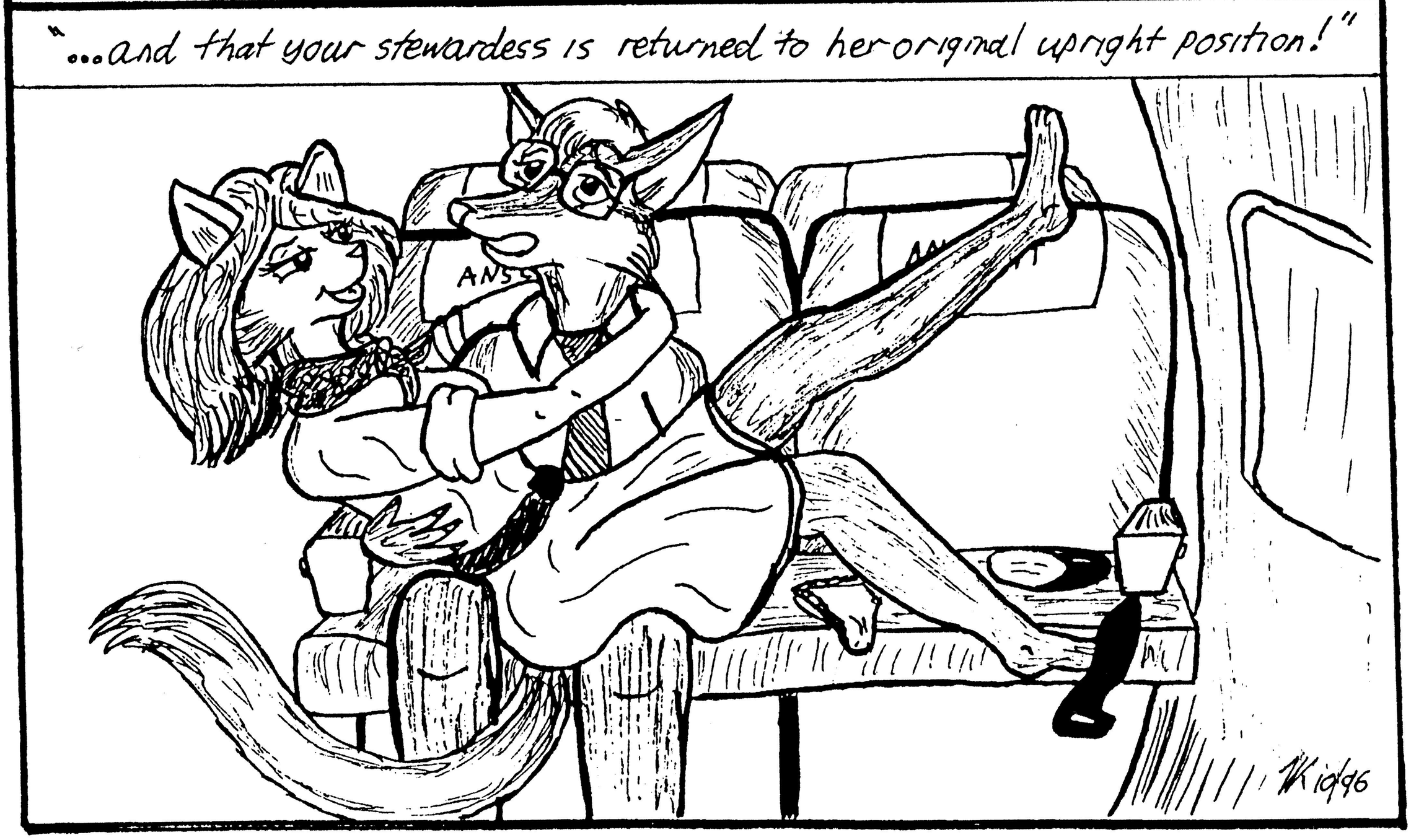
T. Knight 1996



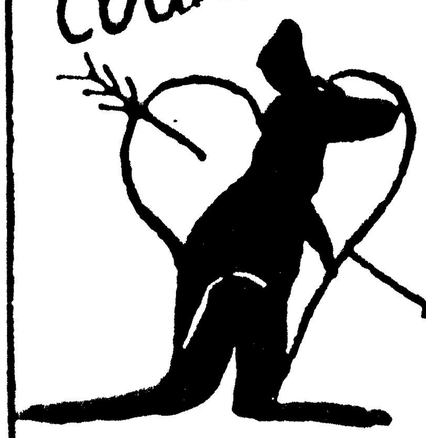








"KANGAROO COURTING"

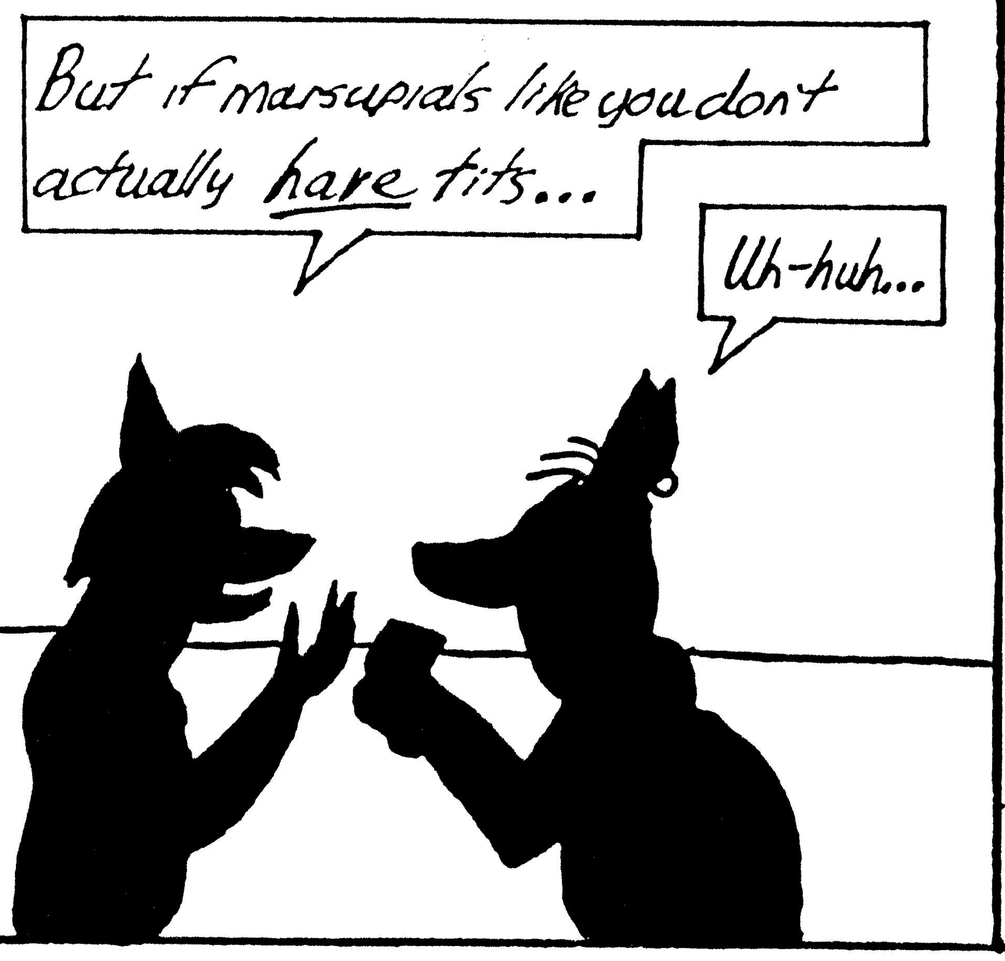


T. Knight 1996

Guest appearance by Kylie (©Craig Hilton)





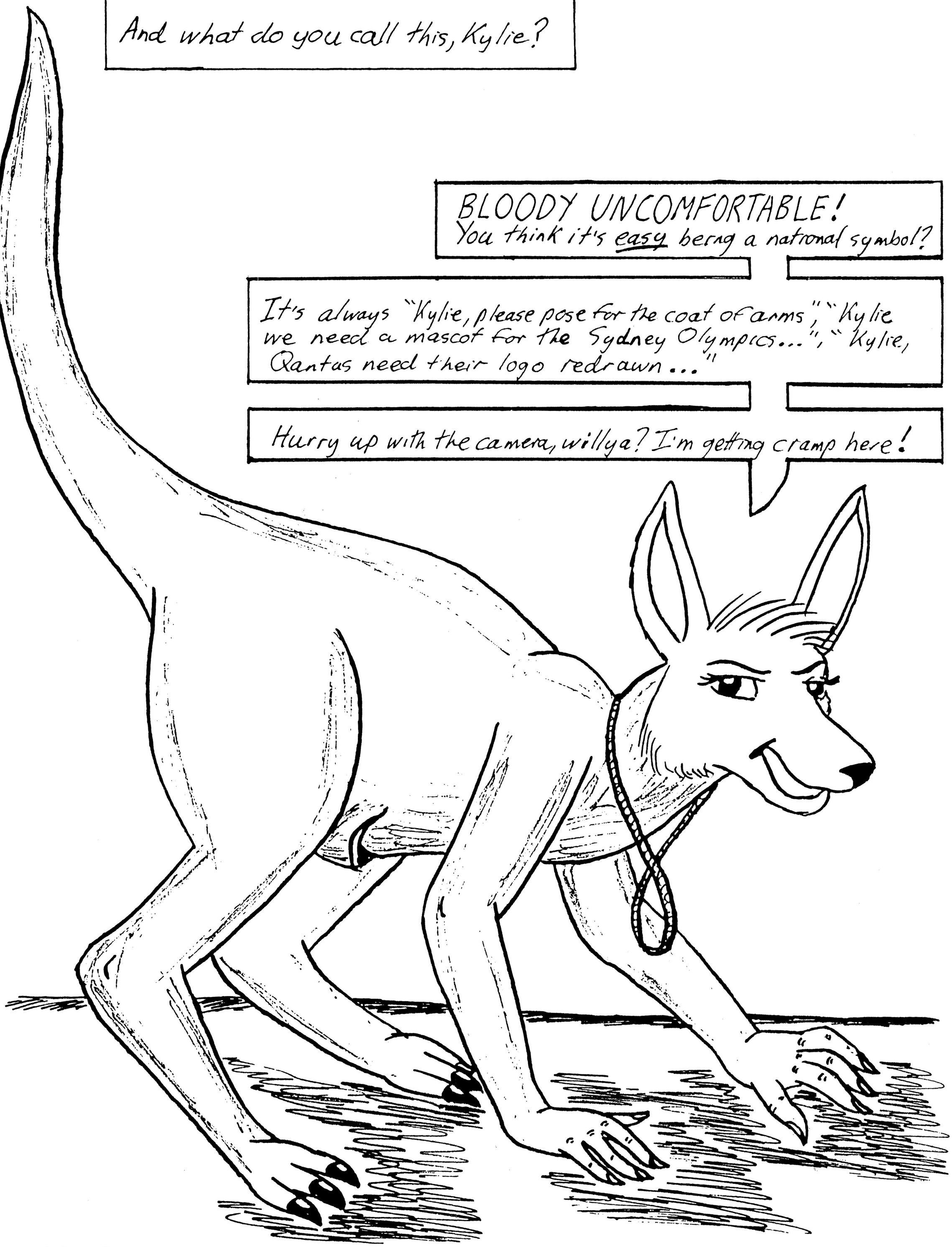








TK 10/96



Terry Knight

KYLIE GETS ANNOYED

It seems that Kylie the *SFL* mascot hasn't really been seen since the first issue, so I thought I'd find out why. Here's the result... Kylie © Craig Hilton



Rommel C. Ignacio

This illo is a tribute to one of my friends who just digs my vixen a lot. Because of his enthusiasm, see what that merited, hmm? Mmm-mmm!

Comparisons and Common Ground

by Will A. Sanborn
illustrated by Bernard Doove



©12/96 B. Doove

Rrakith characters are a co-creation of, and copyright 1996 by Will Sanborn & Bernard Doove.

At the gentle tone of the chime at the door to her cabin, Susan looked up, roused from her quiet contemplation. "Come in," she announced after a moment's hesitation, watching as the doorway glided open with only the slightest sound to reveal one of the ship's newer crew-members. Having come on board several months ago, the small Rrakith complement, a minority to the human crew, were still settling in to life aboard a terran starship. Things had gone very well though, both races working together, slowly learning about the other, and but for a few bumps here and there, the situation was going smoothly.

Susan smiled when she saw the Rrakith standing there and rose from her chair to greet her. "Hello Vashi, what brings you by?" she asked, smiling at her workmate and friend, keeping her teeth hidden, an automatic response now after dealing with the Rrakith on such close terms. "Why don't you come in," she added, motioning to the couch.

"I'd like that," the Rrakith responded to the invitation and followed her into the sitting area of her cabin. Sitting down on the couch, brushing her tail off to her side in an instinctive fluid motion, she turned to face Susan in the chair she'd sat back down in. "You weren't at work today," Vashi said, "I was worried at first, but then they said you had time off for a holiday."

Nodding, Susan looked at her alien friend. They'd been working together for a few months now, placed together because of their similar backgrounds and work experience. Things had been difficult at first, each trying to figure out how to deal with the other, so different, so foreign, but it had been their work which had given them common ground, a starting point for their relationship. Slowly getting used to each other, they'd learned a lot in a relatively short time, and had become closer. Susan was familiar with a few of the other Rrakith on board, but knew Vashi the most. She felt comfortable with her and had taken her for a friend.

"So you were probably wondering why I had the day off while most everyone else was still working?" she asked, smiling slightly.

"Ah, yes I was Susan," Vashi responded. "They said it was a religious holiday relating to the new year... but I thought the terran new year was still three months away. I thought I'd gotten your calendar right." As she finished her voice and expression showed her obvious confusion, looking upon her friend for understanding.

Chuckling softly, Susan answered her with, "Oh yes... I didn't think of that. I could see how that could confuse you." Pausing, looking into her friend's eyes, different for their feline appearance, but showing the spark of thoughts and emotions not too far from her own, she continued. "I'm sorry Vashi, I'm not laughing at you, it's just something I've taken for granted, that most people know of and I didn't realise that you wouldn't be used to that. You see, for my religion we keep a different calendar for holidays."

"A different calendar, but I thought all of Earth used one standard calendar?" the Rrakith questioned, her ear twitching slightly in confusion and interest.

"Well that's true, we do use one standard calendar on our world, but there are some instances where there are others too. For example, with my religion, we use the standard calendar for all of our daily lives, planning and scheduling things like everyone else, but like I said, for holidays, we use the original calendar of our people, dating back several thousand years."

Taking a breath, she continued her explanation. "Our calendar is lunar, not solar like the standard calendar, so the two of them don't sync up, and they were started by different cultures too, so that explains why our new year precedes the standard terran new year by a few months. We celebrate the standard new year of course, as I said we just use this calendar for our religious observations."

Tilting her head quickly to one side in understanding, Vashi smiled back at her, "Okay, so this holiday is for your new year?"

"Well not exactly, our new year's celebration was ten days ago. Today is Yom Kippur, which in English translates to 'The Day of Atonement.'"

Making another affirmative response, Vashi's ears dropped as she parsed the meaning of her friend's statement. Her eyes widening just slightly, she let out a small mewl of surprise as she realized the transgression she might have unknowingly committed. "Oh Susan, that sounds like a very serious holiday. I'm not disturbing you am I? Perhaps I should be going..." she replied, her voice trailing off as she saw the single book placed on the small table in front of them, assuming it to be religious in nature.

She was getting ready to rise from the couch when Susan reached out her hand to steady her. "It's okay Vashi," she spoke softly, "this is a very important holiday for us, probably the most important one of the year. We do spend it in prayer and meditation, but of course I can have some time for a friend, especially on this day I could not be rude to a guest. Please stay a little while."

Looking back at her human friend, seeing the sincerity she'd learned to recognize on her face Vashi relaxed visibly. "Are you sure it's okay Susan? I don't want to disturb you," she asked.

"Yes, it's alright. I've got a while before I have to leave for temple, and of course I have time for you."

Her tail twitching slightly, Vashi looked at her quizzically, hesitating a few moments before asking her another question. "Ummm Susan, if you don't mind... if it's not too intrusive, could I ask you about this holiday, this day of atonement?"

As if she'd anticipated her friend's interest, Susan was quick to respond. "Oh of course that's okay, I'd be happy to try and explain it to you. As I said, we celebrated Rosh Hashanah, our New Year's Day ten days ago, and now at Yom Kippur we look back on the way we conducted our lives for the past year, atoning for the sins and wrongdoings we've committed, asking God for forgiveness and looking ahead to the new year."

"Hmmm," Vashi mused, "that's similar in some ways to our Year's End celebration, looking back on the past and connecting it with the coming year ahead of us. We get very reflective during that time too."

"Yes it is similar in that aspect Vashi, but there's a deep religious aspect to it too. On this day we believe that the gates of heaven are open and we may send our prayers for forgiveness to God and can atone for the transgressions of the past year."

"You mean you can only ask for forgiveness once a year?" Vashi asked, looking a little dubious.

"That's how we believe it, that once a year we come before the Lord and submit our selves to be judged for the previous year's actions, sending our pleas to him, asking to be forgiven."

"But what about the other days of the year Susan, why can't you ask for forgiveness then?" Seeing her friend's troubled expression, she quickly added, "I'm sorry, I don't mean to attack your beliefs, I just don't know if I understand it."

Letting out a small sigh, Susan gave her a slight smile. "It's okay Vashi, I've had this discussion a few times before, and I can understand—It's hard to explain it completely, and I know it must be tough for you, especially since this is probably the first time you've dealt with a differing theology."

Seeing her friend tipping her head slightly in the Rrakith version of a nod, she continued. "Okay, maybe it would help if you explained how you see things from your point of view. What is your relationship with your God—I mean Goddess?" she asked, barely blinking at the small gender mistake she'd made, used to it by now, similar mistakes made countless times before, by both herself and other humans, as well as the Rrakith.

"Okay, that might make it easier for us to understand," Vashi replied. "We all have a bond with the Goddess, letting us communicate to Her through prayers and meditation all the time, on a personal level, as well as through religious ceremonies."

"The same is true with us, we can pray to God any time, asking Him for help in troubled times and sending Him thanks for His aid. Now, how do you view sins, how does your Goddess deal with them?"

"There's no punishment like I've read about briefly in some of your terran religions, but of course anything we do that hurts another pains and disappoints the Goddess. We are each accountable for our own wrongdoings though, and when our lives are over and we've passed from this existence, before we can join with the Goddess in the eternal communion, we must free ourselves of the ties to this life, which includes the weight of the transgressions we've caused against others in our lifetime."

"So before you can join with your Goddess, or in our terms, enter into Heaven, you must atone for the sins you've committed, is that correct Vashi?"

"Yes, that's right Susan, but we can also atone for our sins during our lifetime, reducing the weight upon us as we go along, working to live better with our fellow Rrakith—which would now be expanded to include humans," she added with a smile and a flick of an ear. "In doing so we can best prepare ourselves for meeting the Goddess, reducing the wait we must spend preparing for Her after we've died."

"Ah yes, we have similar beliefs too. Our God is not a vengeful God, but He will punish the wicked as well as rewarding the good. This simply means that in order to get into Heaven, you must have accepted the ways of God and have asked for forgiveness for any sins and misdeeds you've committed. A person who has truly sought forgiveness and tried their best to live a worthy life will be forgiven and will be welcomed into Heaven. In fact, like your beliefs, according to our tradition, the soul must spend some time purifying itself before it can enter heaven, so again there are the similarities."

Seeing her friend move her head slightly in agreement, she continued. "I bet the way we see things isn't too different from one another after all. We've been able to see common threads in the various religions in our world, and I'd be surprised if things aren't similar with you." Picking up the book from the table, Susan looked at her confidently. "This is my people's holy book, the Torah, if we were to compare it with your religious texts, I bet we'd find they had a good deal in common."

Taking the book offered to her and solemnly holding it, opening it up to quietly glance at its contents, Vashi's attention was captured for several moments before returning her gaze to look at her human friend. "I guess you're right Susan, it's just all so new to me—Forgive me for asking this again, but why do you only have one day a year when you can offer up your apologies to your God?"

"It's just what we believe Vashi. This day is set aside for reflection on our conduct of the past year and it gives the opportunity to atone for our transgressions, as we ask God for forgiveness. Why is it only one day a year? I think because it's such a special ceremony and it carries a lot of weight. The rest of the year we try and do our best and can talk with God, but on this day, it reminds us of our duty to God and our fellow man. The asking for forgiveness is very special, and we devote this day to it, if we observe today with sincerity then we can be confident that God has forgiven us. It also gives us a chance to focus on the transgressions we've committed against members of the community, seeking forgiveness from them as well." Pausing, she added "does that make it easier to understand?"

"I think so, again it's a lot to take at once—but then ever since I came aboard there's been a lot of new things to try and get used to. I think you're right about things being similar between us—it's just a little strange looking at them from a different viewpoint."

"Very true, learning about you has had some difficulties too, but it has definitely been worth the trouble," Susan said with a smile, winking at her friend.

Returning the smile Vashi looked silently at her friend, and then turned her attention back to the book she held reverently in her hands. Pausing, thinking things over in her mind, she finally asked, "So your people, I mean humans in general, have several different ways of looking at your God? So many different viewpoints..."

"Yes, as I've said we tend to be very diverse, but the truth is the same, no matter which angle you look at it from."

"So your God, is He a man or a woman?" Vashi asked, fumbling with the concepts of the genders. "Do you have two separate Gods like you have your different sexes? So different from our Goddess—" Saying that a small shiver, barely noticeable, ran through her as she contemplated those thoughts.

"Hmmm, that's a bit literal." Susan replied, thinking for a moment, finding her own thoughts becoming slightly muddled as their two races' vastly-different sexualities were brought to her attention once again. Even after covering the subject several times, that totally-alien aspect of the Rrakith still floored her, if only for a couple of moments.

Recovering her composure, she continued, "For us God is a being beyond the physical realm, so His gender is hard to think of in concrete terms, though traditionally we refer to Him in the masculine form. However, for us we see God as having both masculine and feminine aspects and qualities. While you see the Goddess in Rrakith terms and we see Him from a human perspective, I still think we're talking about the same almighty being. Why She chose to cast you as Rrakith with your form and us as Humanity with our differences, we cannot say, perhaps She's fond of variety and wants us to live in a interesting and colourful universe."

"It's a lot to try and grasp isn't it?" Susan asked, pausing to look at the slight bewilderment of her rrakith friend.

"Yes it is, even though we've been aboard for a few months now, there's still so much to learn. There's a lot about you that is so different, yet also not so totally different that we can't find a way to see it through our eyes, with some work." Then giving Susan a small, almost sheepish smile, she continued, "It still is so new and different for us, and a bit overwhelming at times..."

"I understand, it's been hard at times for us too Vashi, taking the slow steps to learn about you. We might have had a slightly easier time at it though, on Earth we're used to dealing with different societies and over the years have been able to work together and learn more from each other. From what I understand of Rramatharr, your culture is more homogeneous than ours, so this is the first time you've had to deal with such wide diversity." Smiling, she added, "Of course even with our practice, meeting up with you was still a big surprise, and we've still got a good deal of work to bring our two worlds together."

Tilting her head in agreement Vashi replied, "Thanks for the understanding Susan, and for sharing your thoughts on religion with me. I know I've still got a long ways to go too, but you've helped me out a lot and it's been good getting to know you. Things can be a little lonely here, with such a small number of Rrakith on board, and it's been very nice having you as a friend."

Taking her friend's hand which was offered to her in her own, Susan smiled at the alien form in front of her which had become familiar over the past few months. Feeling the soft fur on the back of Vashi's hand, she looked into those feline eyes, the face so catlike in appearance, yet not so far from human in the thoughts and emotions it conveyed and the mind and soul it was a mask for.

"It's been nice getting to know you too Vashi," she answered. "We've both go a ways to go, but I like the thought of making the trip together."

Enjoying the moment of silence between them, Susan broke the mood, noticing the time on the clock read-out on the wall. "Oh wow, I didn't realize it had gotten this late, Vashi. I'm due at temple shortly for the final services of the day, I hope you'll forgive me, but I've got to leave now."

"Of course I understand Susan, and thank you for taking the time to talk with me, could I walk with you to temple?"

"I'd like that, and if you're not busy later, how would you like to get dinner with me? I've been fasting all day and am starting to get a little hungry." Seeing Vashi's agreement she continued, "Okay, the service will last until about 6:00, then I'd like to take some time and get washed up and stuff, how about I drop by your quarters around 7:00?"

"That'd be fine, would you like to discuss things more with me then?"

"Yes, I think I'd like that, maybe you could tell me more about your beliefs... come on let's go." With that they left the room, walking together down the hallways of the ship like two close friends, the friends they'd become.





Gerard Ashworth

HUSH, NOW, CHILD-
INQUISITIVE MINDS
ARE VISITING-

GRATUITOUS WEIRD STRESS KITTENS #1

2 MEANWHILE, AMIDST YOUR PERSONAL RUINS...

THE SLOW MOTION SUICIDE WAS NEAR COMPLETE-AND SHIFTING THROUGH THE DETERIORATION FOR GIGGLES WENT SABRINA AND ALPHONSE W.S.K 2

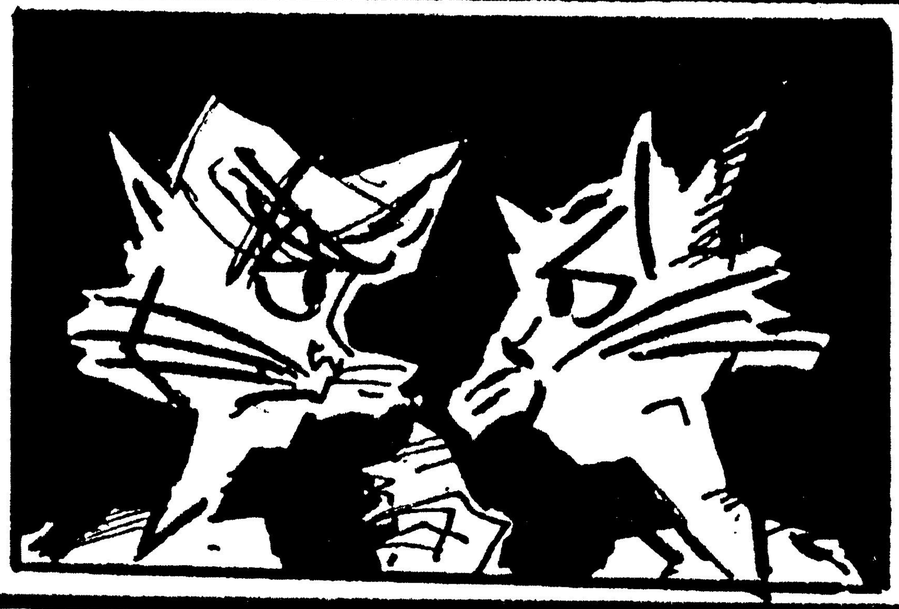
FOUND IT~WADDA YA KNOW, AL 2 IT'S A QUOTE ON A SHRED!!

"IF IT SEZ-'I HAD A GOOD INNINGS'-SHRED IT-TO BITS. I HATE A LIFE LIVED AS A SPECTATOR SPORT!

-hate sport, too-

-how zat.

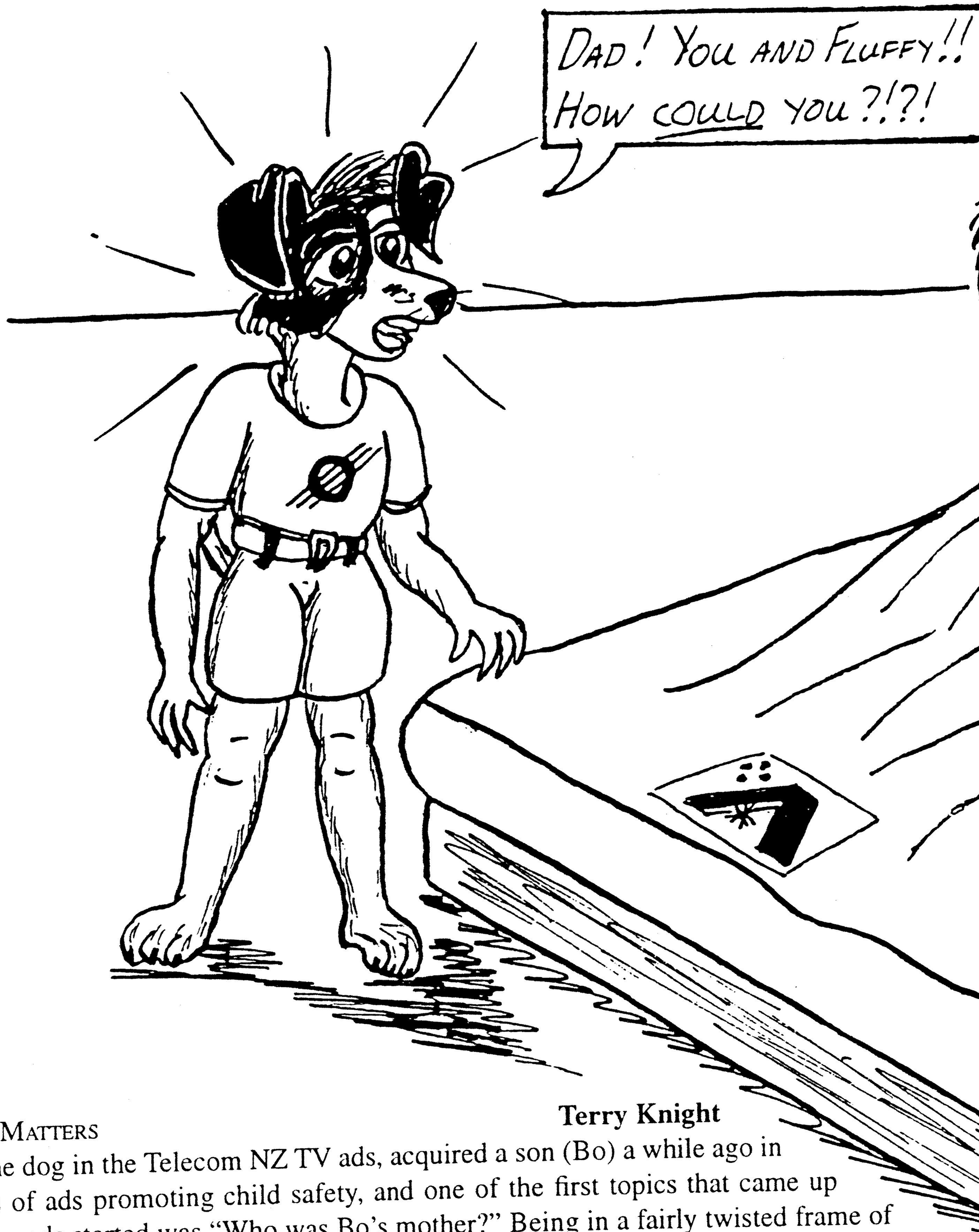
A-GREED!-ahem- LIFE IS NOT A PROPERTY THAT IS PARTICULAR TO ANY SPECIFIC SORT OF MATTER, LIKE CARBON. I THINK LIFE IS DEFINED BY HAVING A CERTAIN SORT OF LOGIC AND ANYTHING HAVING THAT LOGIC IS ALIVE ~ CHRISTOPHER LANGTON, SCIENTIST.



{SHREDSHREDSHREDSHRED}

LET'S GO FIND SOME MORE BITTER INSIGHTS TO INVOLVE OURSELVES IN-

LET'S!



Terry Knight

FAMILY MATTERS

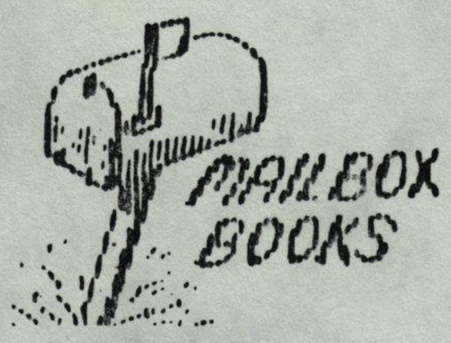
Spot, the dog in the Telecom NZ TV ads, acquired a son (Bo) a while ago in a series of ads promoting child safety, and one of the first topics that came up when the ads started was "Who was Bo's mother?" Being in a fairly twisted frame of mind at the time, I came up with the idea that Spot had been having a "bit on the side" with another popular character, Fluffy the cat from a series of Ansett New Zealand ads…

"FAMILY MATTERS" TK 11/96

IT'S NOT WHAT IT SEEMS, BO... UM, I CAN EXPLAIN!

"SPOT & BO" COURTESY TELECOM,
"FLUFFY" COURTESY ANSETT N.Z

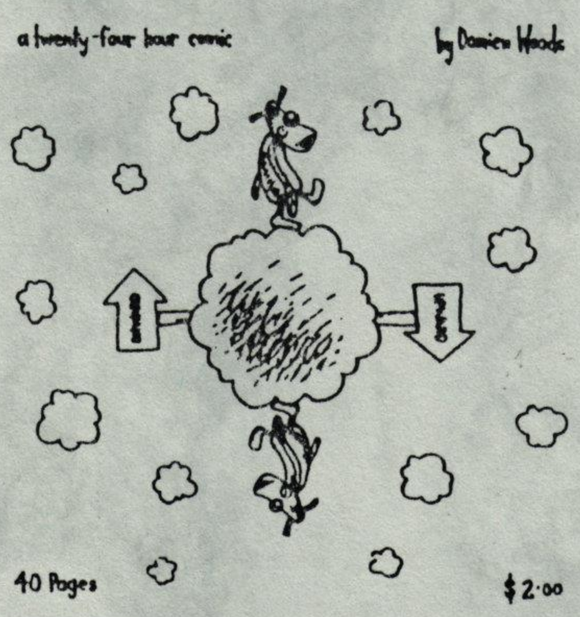
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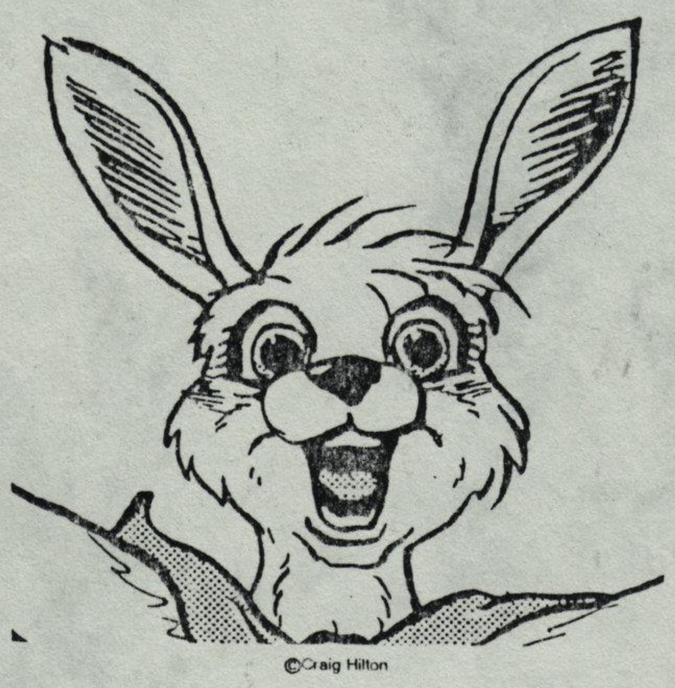
Damien Woods, a Queensland-based cartoonist, decided to take up the challenge of doing a full comic book in 24 hours. The result is **A Twenty-Four Hour Comic**, a touching story about a plush toy dog that had to learn how to deal with his owner growing up and leaving him alone. This one-shot costs $2.00, plus postage.

Write to:

Damien Woods
54 Schulzs Road
Coolana QLD 4311
Australia



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HOW COULD YOU HAVE BEEN SO, SO WRONG?!

SOUTH SMURFLANDS

DIVDIMES 11.96.